

2009-09-01

Spatial Reconfigurations: Bodily Terrains and their Suppression on the New York Waterfront: the Greenwich Village Piers 40-53 1936-1998

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Spatial Reconfigurations

**Bodily Terrains and their Suppression
On the New York Waterfront**

The Greenwich Village Piers 40-53; 1936- 1998

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Submitted for Master of Philosophy

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September 2009

ABSTRACT

There has been seismic change on the New York waterfront since World War II. The shipping industry of longshoremen on the rough docks, has given way to mothers with babies in a bucolic landscape. The former condition existed within Kristeva's *theories of abjection* (1982), and today we have a suppression of that abjection through the municipal authority of the Hudson River Park Act (1998). This control of space is integral to gentrification. The abject condition existed as a changing zone of spatial occupiers and colonies, who demarcated their territories as bodily terrains on the edge of the city. Due to particular cultural episodes on the Greenwich Village waterfront- mob violence, sexual activity, cultural creations, reformer and gentrifier plans- there is an opportunity for reading spatial reconfigurations as coalescing around the changes in occupancy and colonies. It allows for contemplation on marginality and the reality of national border zones as places of varying frontiers.

This study set out to identify the key themes of change, how they progressed over time, and their impact on the waterfront of the Village. The use of maps, photographs and social, economic and historical literature support the theory that the abject was inherently symbolic on the waterfront and integral to its transformation. Key themes, segregated by colonial identity (*Mr. Joe Docks vs. the Gangsters and Shylocks; The Clone; The Legendary Children; The Mamas*) are individually explored in a chronological order. Conclusions are referenced together to form an overall theory that demonstrates the argument. The dominating slant of the thesis is in the social/ cultural reconfiguration of space- '*the crowds, pacing straight for the water*'- that has fostered on the waterfront over the latter part of the twentieth century. I argue *colonization* is the evidence for this socio-spatial condition, and a forgotten generator of spatial change. Its study therefore is important within a framework of gentrification and the transformation of public space in New York in the Twentieth Century.

Note

Please note that in the use of profane language in selected quotes in this thesis, I have appended them with the use of the astrix in the interest of sensitivity. However, it is intended that they be understood in their full context and as an important element in the representation of the raw condition of the waterfront, which by no means was a tender environment, and the language I believe reflects that.

Declaration

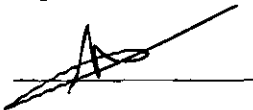
I, Mark Curley, certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of M. Phil, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any Institute.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mark Curley', written over a horizontal line.

Date:

16 DEC '09

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and thank my supervisor Noel Brady DipArch BScArch SMArchS (MIT) MRAI, Lecturer in Design, Theory and Urbanism at the Dublin School of Architecture; and my advisory supervisor Professor James Horan DipArch FRIAI MIDI RIBA ARB, Head of the Dublin School of Architecture; for their guidance, inspiration, insight and time; this thesis would not have been possible without them. Thanks are also due to the Dr. Lorcan Sirr, Head of Research for the DIT Faculty of the Built Environment; the Graduate Program staff; Aileen Mullane, School Administrator and the staff of Dublin Institute of Technology.

I would like to thank Felice Picano¹, Dr. Mitchell L. Moss² and Aaron Betsky³ for their time in answering my questions/emails. In New York, I must thank the Municipal Archives, the Archives of the Museum of the City of New York and The National Archive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender History.

I wish to thank my parents, family and friends for their continued support and patience throughout my studies.

¹ Felice Picano, Author of both fiction and non-fiction books concentrating on gay life in New York City; works include: *The Lure*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1979), *Like People in History*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 1995), *The New York Years*, (New York: Alyson Books, 2000), although written from 1975 through 1982, *Art and Sex in Greenwich Village: Gay Literary Life after Stonewall*, (New York: Carroll & Graft, 2007).

² Dr. Mitchell L. Moss is the Henry Hart Rice Professor of Urban Policy and Planning at New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

³ Aaron Betsky, Director, Cincinnati Art Museum and author of several books on architecture including: *Building Sex: Men, Women, Architecture and the Construction of Sexuality*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1995); *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1997).

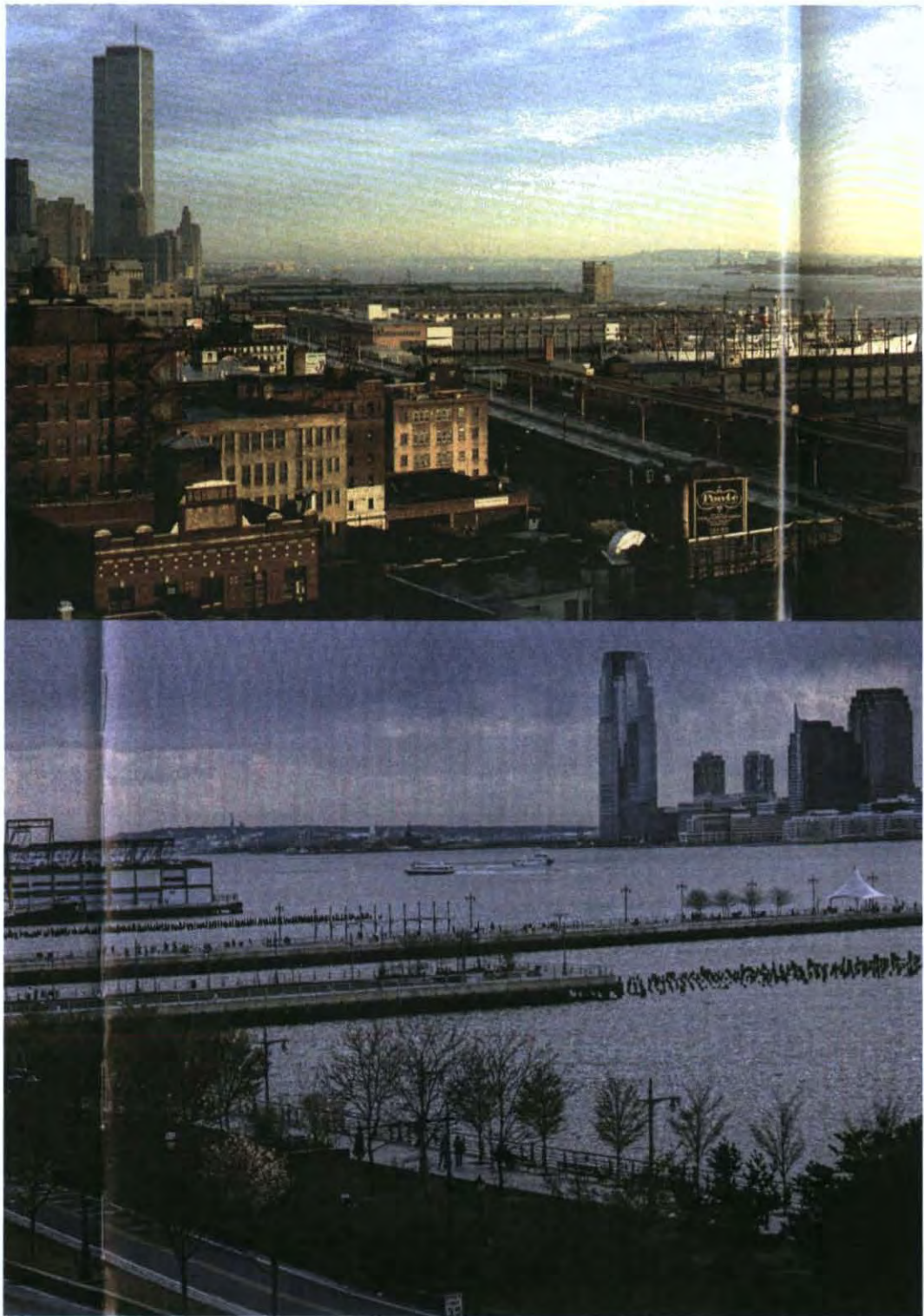


Fig (i), (ii): The Greenwich Village Piers, in 1980 above (a ship is moored at pier 42; pier 40 is above that; pier 45 is to the fore and the derelict elevated Miller highway cuts diagonally across the image) approximately the same view below, transformed into the Hudson River Park in 2005 (pier 40 is to the far left (blue), with the pilings of pier 42 to its fore, pier 45 bisects the image across the center; pier 46 to the fore of that, and the esplanade running across the bottom of the image).

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

'I must go down to the sea again, to the vagrant gypsy life'

John Masfield, *Sea-Fever*. 1913

'But this is a people paradise, where we are the creatures mostly'

Edward Field, *New York*. 1977

In the scene setting, opening paragraph of his novel *Querelle of Brest*, Jean Genet writes that '*seaports [are a] theatre of recurrent crimes*' (1953, p. 7), from which we can make the deduction that marginality- people, activity, condition- is an axiom on the waterfront. In New York, this norm however, has been eclipsed in the recent past by the construction of a supine park on the former industrial waterfront of Greenwich Village. This green reconfiguration belies its guttural origins as a working harbor, before its transformation into a recreational park and its escape from '*the curse of the border vacuums*'¹ (Jacobs, 1961, p. 258). The waterfront today has re-ordered its status from a state of unchaste *abjection*,² to being on the *right side* of the tracks (fig 1.1). The people and events of the Village waterfront generate an interesting study of transformation and offer a unique understanding of urban change.

¹ The border is according to Jacobs a *blight-prone zone* in cities most easily associated with the 'wrong side of the tracks'

² Barbra Creed writes, '*the abject threatens life, it must be radically... deposited on the other side of an imaginary border which separates the self from that which threatens the self*' (as cited in Pentony, 1996).

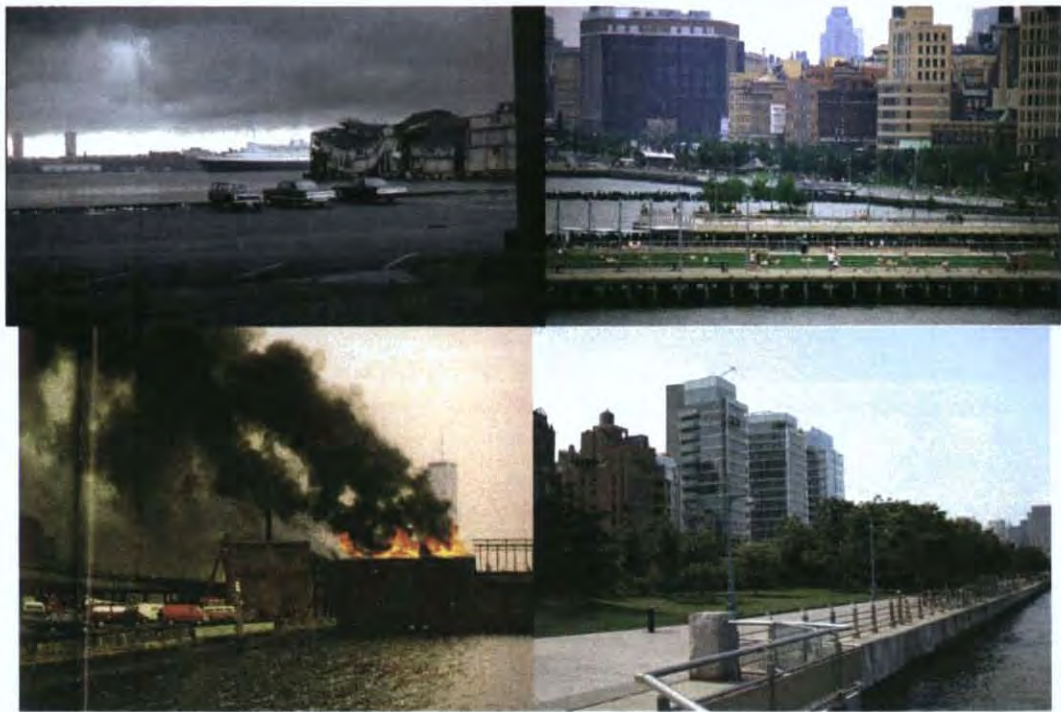


Fig 1.1: Above- pier 51 in 1978 and pier 45 and 46, (with pier 51 in the background) today, as a park.
Below- pier 46 and elevated Miller Highway in 1980; and a view of the same location today.

The Greenwich Village Waterfront- A Brief History

The Greenwich Village waterfront on Manhattan's West side is merely a small section of the overall port of New York.³ It constitutes only a handful of piers out of the several hundred surrounding the harbor, and yet offers a unique story of transformation. The Village waterfront has constantly evolved: from a natural shoreline, to a working dock, to its current park condition. The first construction on the Village *riverfront* was the building of Newgate Prison in 1797, placing marginality in the very origins of the manmade *waterfront*. The prison had its own pier for the easy transportation of prisoners. A decade later in 1807, Robert Fulton first launched his new invention- the steamship- from Newgate's pier. The same year he began a regular steamship commuter service from there, prompting the beginnings of commercial

³ The total port and harbor covers an area of approximately 1,500 square miles with over 700 miles of waterfront that includes the Hudson River (North River), the Lower Bay, the Upper Bay, Raritan and Newark Bays, Jamaica Bay, the Harlem River (really a shipping channel) and the East River, which is actually a tidal strait between Long Island Sound and the Upper Bay

shipping on the Village waterfront. The Greenwich Market opened close to the waterfront in 1808 just below Christopher Street, south of the prison. It required regular transportation of goods. On the waterfront, north of the prison, Fort Gansevoort was built in 1812- the waterfront as barricade- to defend the city after the British had invaded and burned Washington DC. The fort luckily never saw battle. Following a yellow fever epidemic in New York in 1822,⁴ Greenwich Village expanded rapidly with refugees from the southern tip of Manhattan moving north and settling down. This led, by the close of the decade to Greenwich Village becoming incorporated into the expanding City of New York. The Erie Canal opened in 1825 connecting New York with the interior heartland and the Great Lakes via the canal and the Hudson River. This spawned a massive building effort and the growth of shipping and industry on the West side, particularly along the edge of Greenwich Village.⁵ In the late 1820s, Newgate prison was razed to make way for industry and new piers.⁶ In 1849 Fort Gansevoort was demolished to make way for the onward march of the industrialized waterfront.⁷ This heavily active shipping industry continued on the waterfront of Greenwich Village up until 1956, when technological advances (the container ship) led to the decline of shipping in Manhattan. Very quickly after the shipping industry departed the West side, other groups moved into use the facilities left by the docks. In 1959 there was a makeshift lido at pier 52, and in 1965 the first steps of gentrification began, with the first warehouse conversion. This mixing of recreationists and developers continued through the end of the Twentieth Century. The waterfront now has transformed from a gritty port, to luxury glass condominiums with a beautifully landscaped park running along the river's edge.

⁴ New York at this time refers to the City at the very southern tip of Manhattan Island, when Greenwich Village was a rural village north of the city.

⁵ This changed the concentration of the shipping industry from the East side to the West side of Manhattan.

⁶ In 1825, Sing Sing prison opened in Ossining New York further up the Hudson River outside the City limits, replacing Newgate.

⁷ This history of the Village waterfront was derived from Burrows and Wallace (1999) and Trager (2003).

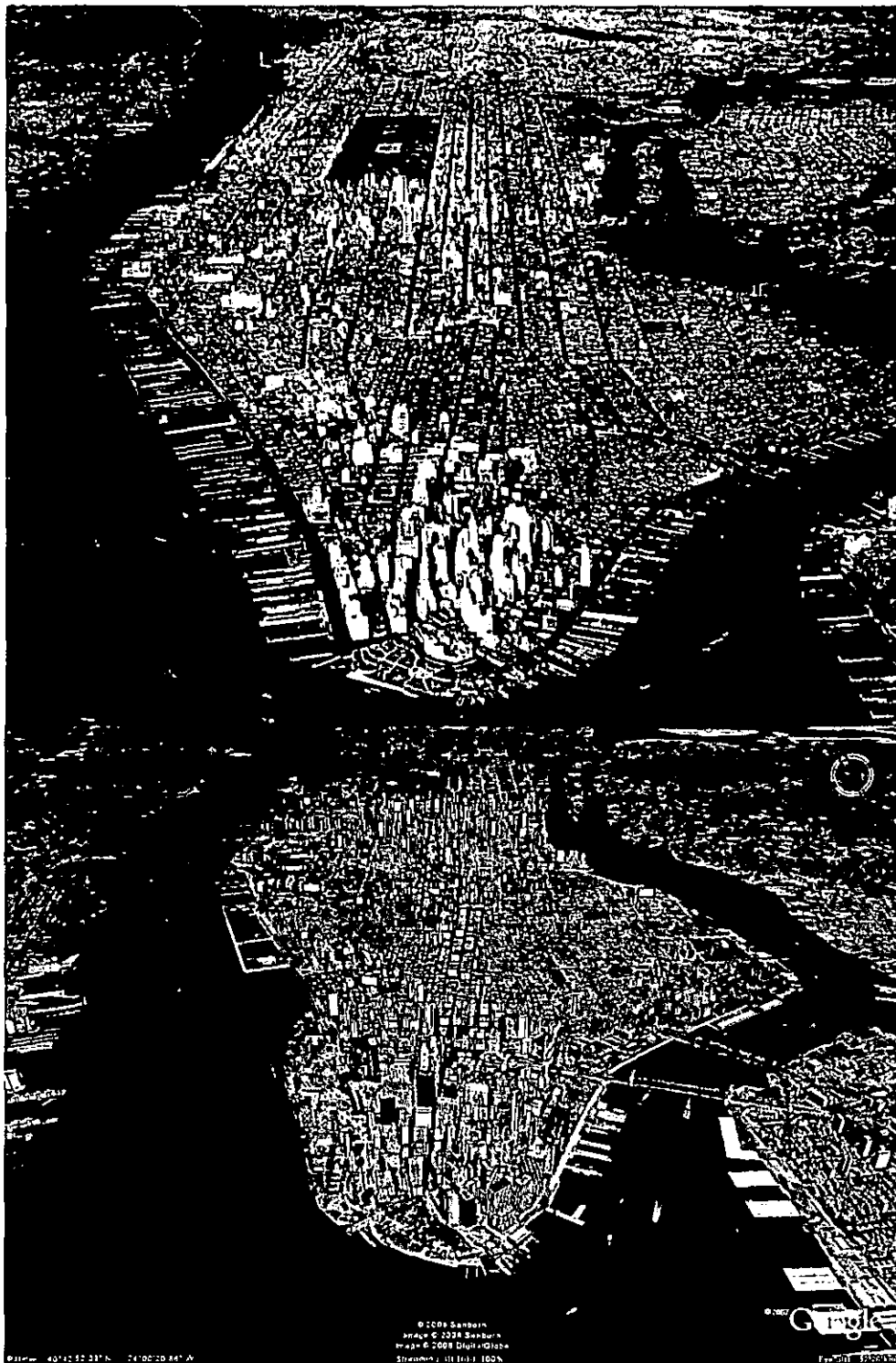


Fig 1.2: An Aerial view of Manhattan looking North, in the 1920s (above), and the same view today (below). It is worth noting how the edges of the island have been smoothen, with less piers now that shipping no longer takes place in Manhattan. After four hundred years of expansion, the city is regressing around the edges. The Greenwich Village piers are highlighted in red.

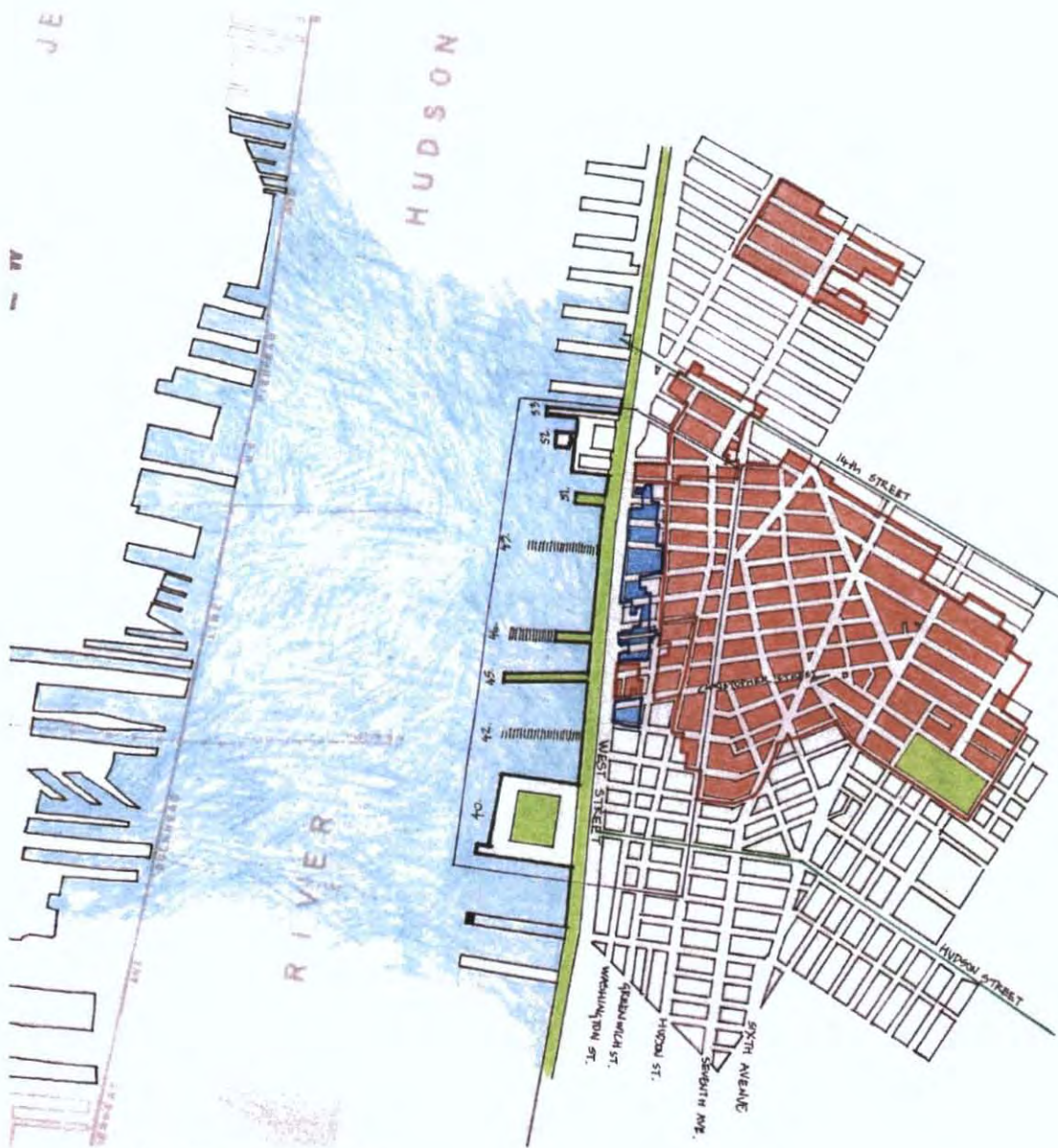


Fig 1.3: Map of Greenwich Village today:

(red) Greenwich Village Historic District.

(blue) Proposed Far West Village Historic District.

(green) Park- The linear Hudson River Park on the waterfront, and Washington Square Park in the center.

(green lines) indicate southern and northern boundaries of Greenwich Village.

(purple line) indicates the area of study, piers 40- 53.

The Waterfront, The Margin

The waterfront forms the edge of the city, the margin between the city and the river. It is the periphery and the point where the city collapses into the river.⁸ The edge is the most primordial understanding of the *waterfront*. It is a border region. This physicality, for Julia Kristeva (1982) is abject. Therefore, the waterfront represents abjection. Kristeva's concept of abjection originates in the image of the infant who convulses at the breast and regurgitates the mother's milk (vomits)- he abjects himself in rejection of the mother in order to create the independent self.⁹ When the abject later returns, *'the abject is thus associated with various borderline phenomena'* (Christian, 2004)- death, pus, bodily fluids, *sh*t*, blood, deviant sex and crime. The abject is our reaction (convulsion, horror, vomit) to these, as they represent a breakdown of the self and the social order.

'it is [] not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer... any crime... cunning murder... Abjection [] is immoral, sinister, scheming and shady: a terror that disassembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter' (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4) emphasis added.

The waterfront history, location and occupants encompass this *hatred that smiles*. It is the margin and creates the marginal, because *'on the fragile border (borderline cases) [] identities (subject/ object, etc.) do not exist or barely so- double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject'* (1982, p. 207). All normal order becomes *disorder* on the margin and as such a space, the waterfront distorts and confuses. The orthogonal city blocks end

⁸ This 'edge' is a national border of the United States of America, diluted since the arrival of air travel, but before then the arrival point for thousands of immigrants to America, it was here, on the Village waterfront that they *crossed the border*.

⁹ From Luara Christian's interpretation of Kristeva's concept, (Camera Obscura, Sept 01 2004)

at the river's edge and the vertical city becomes the horizontal waterfront.¹⁰ For Mary Douglas 'all margins are dangerous' and the 'matter issuing from them is marginal stuff', which fits with pop cultural references of the waterfront as a place of danger and outsiderism.¹¹ She notes however, 'the mistake is to treat bodily margins in isolation from all other margins' (1969, p. 121); thus allowing a connection between the edge location and the body. When we read this with Kristeva's recognition that 'abjection is coextensive with social and symbolic order' (1982, p.68), we inevitably begin to examine the social element of the waterfront and the populations that exist on the edge.

The terror, violence, murder, decay, sexual deviancy¹² and bodily secretions that cause abjection are the foundation of the waterfront's symbolic order and evoke the identity of the occupants down by the river- the longshoremen, the mob, the homosexuals and the gangs of gay youths. These varying populations of very different stature, each caused abjection in their own era. During the shipping era, the mob violently degraded the longshoremen: 'vicious gashes were opened and bones were broken' (Schulberg, 2005 [1954], p. 241).¹³ The mob controlled the area through terror, violence and widespread murder: 'Costello was shot to death on June 15, 1937, as he was wheeling a baby carriage' (Johnson, 2005 [1948], p. 59).¹⁴ There was abjection in the use of the pier sheds for homosexual activity, with 'gallons of semen spilled into [the] pock-marked skin' of the decaying waterfront (Kramer, 1978, p. 25-26).¹⁵ Later the abject was evidenced through prostitution, homelessness and at least one murder of a transsexual youth that hung out there- Venus Extravaganza- 'found after four days, strangled'

¹⁰ Bender (2007) associates the horizontal with the uniform of the convict's horizontal striped clothing- emphasizing the connection between the abject and the linear and horizontal, the physical low-level.

¹¹ For reference see the rape scene in the film *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1989) or the motorcycle race scene in the film *Black Rain* (1989). As a side note, it is interesting that both these movies are from 1989, when New York was in metropolitan disorder and more so on the edge. The waterfront was the disgruntled edge of a disgruntled city.

¹² There is a danger in using the term 'deviant' in referring to sexual activity that is different from the hetero-centric 'norm', however it should be noted that sodomy laws existed until 2003 in the United States and homosexual conduct laws still exist in the states of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas, which places such acts in the realm of the criminal.

¹³ The bodily abject of the open wound; the social abject of the criminal.

¹⁴ The murder was abject, but the presence of a child and its orphanage double the convulsive horror.

¹⁵ Abjection caused by the bodily excretion passing the boundary of the body, and the abjection of homosexual sex itself, because it could not lead to procreation.

as chronicled in the documentary film *Paris is Burning* (1990). These events, as they traverse across time but remain in the one location of the Greenwich Village waterfront, produce what Judith Butler calls a *domain of abjection*. Where that '*abjection designates a degraded or cast out status within the terms of sociality*' (Butler, 1993, p.3, 243); it is a locale, a specific space within the city as a whole, that is a repository for all the filth, dirt and marginality. In the practical application of this symbolism Bingaman, Sanders and Zorach write '*we can consider the physical organization of zones of abjection [as they] constitute large portions of Western cities*' (2002, p. 7). The waterfront of Greenwich Village comprises such a physical manifestation- a zone that the author Felice Picano in the 1970s, refers to as part of '*Beat me: F*ck me Country*'.¹⁶

Abjection and Gentrification

It is easy regard the waterfront's transformation as a simple process of real estate gentrification. To do so however, tends to ignore how gentrification is a reaction to the zone of abjection, and how the city needs the marginal as a means to push through reform. By designating the waterfront as a *zone of abjection* and understanding its physical attributes- a location the city would refer to as *slum*, *ghetto* or a *no-go area*-¹⁷ it allows the city imagine notions of spatial reform to bring the waterfront back into the city's fold and within the social norms of the majority. The zone therefore fulfills a need by the city to acknowledge areas *requiring* regeneration projects and the assumed economic returns. It is in the placement of abjection as a symbol of location that the act of gentrification reacts against. This desire to restore order- to *gentrify*-¹⁸ follows historical trends of both social and spatial redevelopment

¹⁶ Picano referred to this spatial moniker in an email correspondence with the author in 2007.

¹⁷ The edge of social order

¹⁸ Noting the class and gender (gentleman) distinction in such acts.

projects where *'neglect and decay, justify the implementation of development plans'* (Bingaman, Sanders and Zorach, 2002, p.7) and gentrification is used as a tool to control specific undesirable sections of society and the city.¹⁹ In New York City there has been a long tradition of this kind of re-ordering: Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's plan for Central Park in 1858, was an answer to the 1851 call by Mayor Kingsland for a park that would aid the *'thousands who pass the day of rest among the idle and dissolute, in porter houses, or in places more objectionable'* (cited in Stern, 1999, p. 82). Olmsted conceived the parks as *'realms of psychological healing'* that *'he hoped would have a civilizing effect on the dangerous classes populating the American city'* (Ouroussoff, 2008)- the civilizing frontier, an Eden.²⁰

The relocation (removal) of the city's poor and minorities was also strongly pursued under the tenure of Robert Moses as Chairman of the City Planning Commission (1924- 1968) and through Mayor Wagner's Slum Clearance Committee (1954- 1965) to allow for housing and roadway projects. These often used dubious reasons in order to underscore political and social ideologies. In construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway *'Moses elected to tear down 159 buildings, housing 1,530 families instead of tearing down six buildings housing nineteen families'* (Caro, 1975, p. 878). In order to classify this poor working class neighborhood as slum in need of clearance, slum conditions were created through the city-funded Nassau Management Company by accelerating abandonment and decay and allowing opportunistic crime take hold in specific neighborhoods. This demonstrated the need for marginal designation in order to justify re-development. This *restore to order* of zones of abjection reached an ideological peak in 1976 with Roger Starr's (New York City housing commissioner) *planned shrinkage* program, in which the city would *'simply withdraw all housing construction effort* [including fire service,

¹⁹ In Los Angeles, Mike Davis notes race, gender and sexuality based preventions and curfews by the LAPD, as *'directly abet[ting] the current gentrification strategy'* (1990, p. 258).

²⁰ The park also involved the clearance of the settlement Seneca Village- where unusual for the time the properties and churches were owned by working class African Americans.

subways etc.] *from certain sections where the disorderly and disorganized families concentrate, where there is a critical mass of very, very difficult people*' (Sites, 2003, p. 39). The city then could reduce its scope to a smaller wealthier area. In this unimplemented case, the city was rejecting outright the *zones of abjection*, particularly those in the outer boroughs of The Bronx and Brooklyn. However, Starr in his re-defined city would have left a final abject frontier- the Manhattan waterfront. Was it therefore deemed salvageable?

Social reordering, under the guise of gentrification, continues in the city of 2008, with the Empire State Development Corporation's (a state body) declaring that an area in *Manhattanville* (a predominantly Black and Latino neighborhood in West Harlem) is '*blighted*' (NYT City Room Blog, July 17, 2008), allowing an invocation of *eminent domain* on private properties that are within the area of a proposed seventeen-acre extension to Columbia University's campus. The plan has been approved by the New York City Council- '*through the ESDC's invocation of eminent domain, the state will take over these commercial properties and then transfer ownership to Columbia, with an understanding that the land can be put to better civil use by the University*' (Columbia Spectator, 2008) emphasis added.²¹ Civil use negates and suppresses the abject, because there is the prospect of civilization being restored.

Gentrification on the Waterfront

When we examine the same re-ordering forces on the waterfront, we find the city attempting to reassert control over this fringe zone of Greenwich Village through infrastructural projects, among them the *Ebasco Plan*, *Westway* and the *Hudson River Park*. In 1962 the city commissioned a comprehensive plan for the Hudson River waterfront,²² hiring *Ebasco Services Inc.* a multinational construction company specializing in massive infrastructural projects. This

²¹ This form of gentrification is known as 'institutional gentrification' as it is funded, planned and facilitated by both government bodies and large civil institutions- in this case a university.

²² There was continued pressure on the city from various groups to reform the labor problems, vacant piers and decay.

contract sealed the outcome of the study towards structural reform of the waterfront, with an emphasis on industry and docking facilities. The plan outlined the future landfill area of Battery Park City, which would later obliterate the waterfront and piers. This was infrastructural gentrification, which although not based on residential real estate change, did present a cleaned up waterfront free of organized crime.

The *Westway* plan of 1974 was a proposal to replace the recently collapsed elevated highway that ran along the waterfront on the West side. The plan envisioned building a tunnel on the outer rim of the waterfront and building a park above it. It would have removed all the decaying piers, the elevated highway and taken cars away from street level on the congested waterfront. It would also by default remove the mob, the homosexuals, the homeless and the prostitutes from the vicinity of the waterfront and the piers. In this essence it would have eradicated the *zone of abjection*. One of the proponents of the plan was Dr. René Dubos.²³ He saw the park as mitigating the effects of the decaying environment of the waterfront as it fit within his theories of the city.

'The most deplorable aspect of existence in American cities may not be murder, rape and robbery, but the constant exposure of children to pollutants, noise, ugliness and garbage in the streets', 'this constant exposure conditions children to accept public squalor as the normal state of affairs and thereby handicaps them mentally at the beginning of their lives' (cited in Montgomery, 1982).

In this case, the restoration of the waterfront through *Westway* would adjust the status of the *normal*, away from a normalizing state of abjection, back towards the conventional social

²³ Dr. Dubos was a bacteriologist who wrote extensively on man's endangerment to himself through environmental pollution, and author of *So Human an Animal*, which won a Pulitzer prize for nonfiction in 1969.

norm, (but as we will note later, the delay in building *Westway* would actually lead to further ingraining the *zone of abjection* on the waterfront).

The current condition of the *Hudson River Park* arose as the next solution to the waterfront decay and marginality- after the failure of the *Westway* project in 1985- becoming legally binding in the *Hudson River Park Act* of 1998. This project re-ordered the waterfront for civil recreation, with playing fields, parkland, boardwalks, toilets, closing times, rules for users and its own Park's Department police service to keep activity within the law and socially acceptable norms. As the Act stipulated, the Hudson River Park would '*help alleviate the blighted, unhealthy, unsanitary and dangerous conditions that characterize much of the area*' and benefit '*the health and social welfare of the people of the state*' (Hudson River Park Act 1998, p. 1-2). In essence this forms a *cordon sanitaire* around the city (a barricade around the city protecting the health of the city), in light of the Hudson River Park's inclusion in Mayor Bloomberg's plan to encircle Manhattan Island in linear green parks. In a GMHC²⁴ subway billboard for *National Condom Week* 2004, the idea of *cordon sanitaire* is depicted as a condom surrounding Manhattan²⁵ (fig 1.4). This concept protects the island from abjection- both bodily fluids and the scepter of disease. With the implementation of the Hudson River Park Act through the park's construction and opening in 2003, the *zone of abjection* that once dominated the waterfront area disintegrates on the edge and order is restored.

²⁴ Gay Men's Health Crisis, a volunteer and community Aids service in New York City.

²⁵ It should be noted that the Metropolitan Transport Authority, which runs the subway, prevented its placement in subway cars deeming it '*inappropriate*' as reported in the New York Post (Feb 13, 2004).

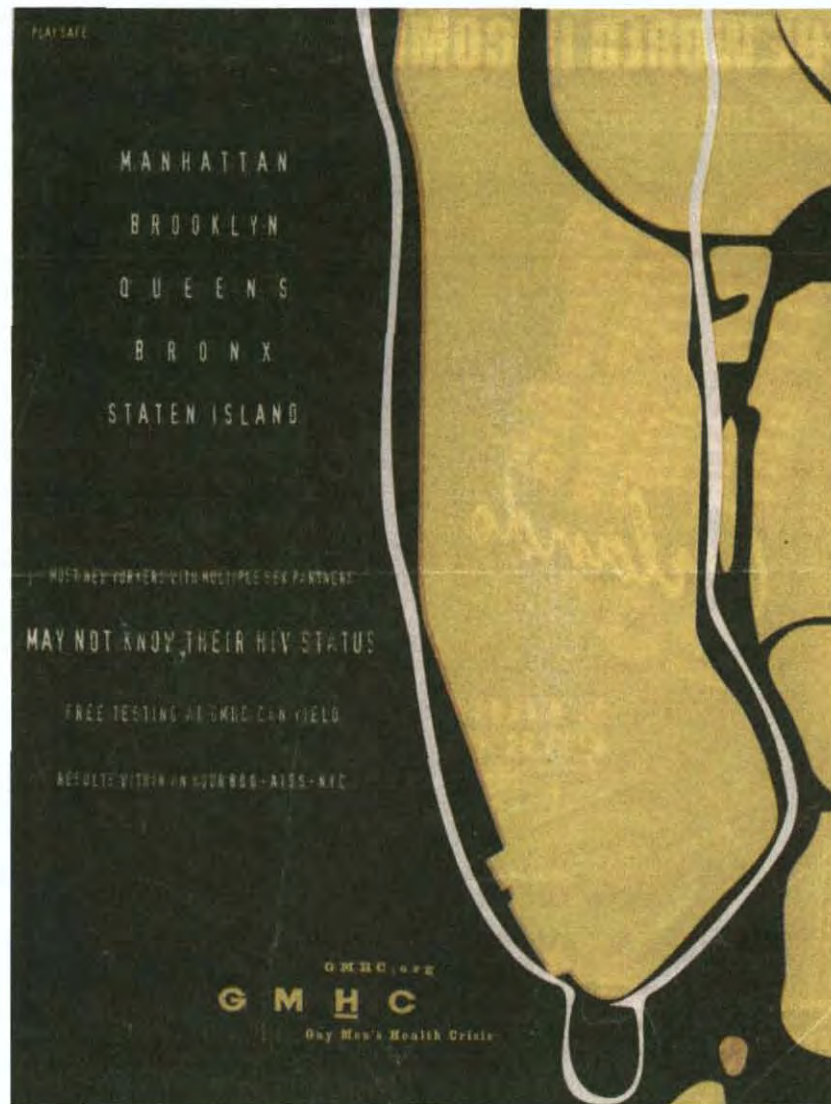


Fig 1.4: GMHC subway billboard, 2004

The concept of a Cordon Sanitaire is clear in this image, a circling of space with a protective zone. It also reiterates the city as a male concept and the need for the city to protect itself.

The Hudson River Park however, unlike both *Ebasco* and *Westway*,²⁶ represents the real estate gentrification of the waterfront.²⁷ The park is the culmination of the residential change in the neighborhood since 1965, which changed from longshoremen's tenements and abandoned warehouses to expensive lofts and Richard Meier's glass towers. The waterfront's newest

²⁶ Both represented infrastructural re-ordering, rather than a class based change in space.

²⁷ Taking real estate gentrification to mean a process that 'involves the restructuring of urban space for a wealthier clientele' (Hackworth, 2007, p. 98).

residents are New York's financial elite, and the new waterfront and park are symbolic of this change in occupancy. Like the government action that created the park, government intervention altered the residential status of the area through re-zoning and tax incentives for development. The contemporary re-ordering and rejection of the abject on the waterfront is a municipal construct, and like Central Park, the intention is to create a '*civilizing effect*'.

Colonization

For Kristeva the edge is the origin of the '*apocalypse*' (1982, p. 207), placing the waterfront as the scene for the final clash of civilization. This war between good and evil²⁸ brings attention to the binary code and the conflicts on the waterfront. The binary code assumes strict distinctions, yet as we have seen, all identity becomes distorted, fuzzy and altered on the edge. However, there are still despite this, identifiable sides on the waterfront. These sides can be organized into distinct colonies of spatial users. These colonies colonize the waterfront, demarking out their territory individually, and collectively becoming bodily terrains that represent the colony in spatial terms.

There are however, significant problems in using the concept of colonization in the discussion of space within the city. Colonization incorporates both sides of the abject binary, being either the causation or superior suppressant of the abject. The colonizer is either the foreign immigrant in the city bringing degradation and filth upon the supposed order of the natives, or he is the *great white hope* bringing order and hygiene to the natives of an undeveloped world. He is either degrader or gentrifier of the city, or the city itself as founded by the Romans as outposts for their newly conquered territories. However on the waterfront, colonization is predominantly connected with the abject, he (for all colonies on the waterfront

²⁸ Using good v. evil to discuss urban transformation raises many questions, who is evil, who is good. It depends on which side you are on and how you view space in the city. This is heavily connected to political affiliation in America, with liberals posting themselves on the side of good and placing the conservatives (developers, government) on the side of evil (or indeed vice versa).

are male) originally has been relegated there by society- creating the symbolic dangerous waterfront. Later he seeks out this symbolism and proceeds to colonize it as his own.

The majority of immigrants to the United States came through the New York waterfront. A large concentration of Irish arrived during the Irish famine in the late 1840s, followed by Italians, before a large number of Eastern European Jews in the early twentieth century. This was curtailed in 1924 with the passing of the Immigration Act, which set quotas on the numbers of entrants. The immigrants to New York particularly of Irish, Italian and Jewish ethnicity were classified as a negative encroachment on the status quo of New York. Their religion (Catholic and Jewish) and poverty were abject to the Protestant elite in the city. This led to the many reformer movements to cleanse the tenement and slum neighborhoods the immigrants inhabited. The waterfront was both the spatial entry point in to the United States and the place that the ethnic groups found work.²⁹ The waterfront was marginal and dirty, the gateway through which the foreigner entered and place where he would take labor-intensive uncouth work. The foreigner is placed socially and physically on the margin. New Yorkers like their Victorian counterparts in London 'were convinced that the influx of immigrants... was a direct cause of vice, degradation, and filth that plagued its cities' (Childers, 2005, p. 201). These foreigners were an abject colony.³⁰ As we saw above, the construction of Central Park was a response to the growing threat of degradation caused by the city's poor and immigrant populations, including a racial bias intended to reinforce the norm. Gandy notes:

'The creation of Manhattan's Central park... presented an Anglophile vision of the English picturesque that was anathema to much Irish political and intellectual opinion at the time. And romantic influences on landscape design fostered

²⁹ With the exception of the Jews, who were not as an ethnic group present on the waterfront. The prejudice of the Catholic Irish and Italians kept the waterfront jobs in the hands of their own ethnicities.

³⁰ Chauncey (1994) notes how it was popular to regard Southern European males as having homosexual tendencies, as a means to degrade their status in society.

suspensions that southern Europeans and other recent immigrants lack the aesthetic sensibilities to appreciate beauty in nature (2003, p. 3).

The colony of Irish on the waterfront ultimately becomes a norm, an axiom of that place. He no longer was an immigrant interloper, as generations of Irish-Americans built up a strong hold on the neighborhoods of the docks during the early Twentieth Century. The neighborhood, still carrying its symbolic abjection (for the symbol outlives generations), therefore becomes place of potential conquer and ripe for a potential new colony. Organized crime, seeing the potential for profit on the docks, moved in and a *colony of gangsters and shylocks*³¹ formed amongst the longshoremen. Their rule was brutal, violent and utterly destructive. From the takeover by John 'cock-eye' Dunn's mob³² in 1936 to the creation of container shipping in 1956, the Village waterfront was controlled by this colony of criminals. The colony ultimately unwittingly devised its own end, as container shipping was created as a defense against the mob, and the Village could not physically accommodate such technical innovations. This colony, the abject criminal gang therefore ended the entire history of the working waterfront in Greenwich Village, as it could not survive after 1956, and the waterfront literally collapsed in on itself.

Of course, the waterfront was then in its abandoned state available for another new occupation. Following the departure of the shipping industry, the giant vacant piers were taken over by homosexuals seeking out locations for sexual activity. This group, stereotyped as the hyper-masculine Clone, used the waterfront as both a social and sexual colony and presented the post-shipping waterfront as a location of recreation. The *Clone Colony* became part of the history of the abject waterfront, dominating the piers in the 1970s. It contributed to Kristeva's

³¹ These were the colloquial names for the mob in the 1930s, the 'gangsters' was the term for the mob itself and the 'shylocks' were the loan sharks who operated along side the mob. You will note, I tend towards the use of 'mob' (Irish) rather than 'mafia' (Italian) in discussing organized crime on the Village waterfront. This is a means to ethnically distinguish the Irish Village piers from other Italian controlled piers, particularly in Brooklyn.

³² Each ethnic group (Irish, Italians, Jews) had their own gangs that exploited their own.

fuzzy edge identity by simultaneously creating both abjection and utopia on the waterfront, up until the piers physically collapse and the clone departs. Connected with the Clone colony through sexual identity, but gaining independent identity after the Clones depart, the *Legendary Children Colony* come to dominate the waterfront in the 1980s-1990s. They are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth who use the waterfront as their own gathering spot in the city. They are abject, not only because they are poor and racial minorities but also because their identity and shifting gender disrupts the binary order. They play with sexuality and gender and operate as gangs. They fluidly demark their zones by congregating flamboyantly on the streets of the neighborhood. The Legendary Children are the remaining abjection on the waterfront, and their position is currently not secure.

Fig 1.5: The waterfront as zone of abjection from the historical layers of differing colonies.

The colony becomes a yardstick by which the transformation of the waterfront can be assessed. Three colonies existed on the waterfront, the gangsters and shylocks, the clones, and the legendary children. Each one I approach as an independent chapter in this thesis as a means to track transformation; these are framed within the historic norm of the longshoremen and the attempts to re-order the waterfront by the Reformer (gentrification). But as we noted above the waterfront and the abjection on the border raises the issue of the binary order, which we must address. The colonies are profoundly male, even as the masculine identity is distorted through sexuality and gender assignment decisions, so where does that leave the female on the waterfront? She clearly exists there on the edge, as photographs over the last several decades testify to her presence, but at no point does she come to dominate the waterfront or garner the control and spatial identity that the colonies do. I therefore tackle her position on the waterfront in her own chapter. As her presence on the waterfront is in coordination with the process of gentrification (the making of space safe for female habitation), she is tackled together with that process, even as she stands outside it.

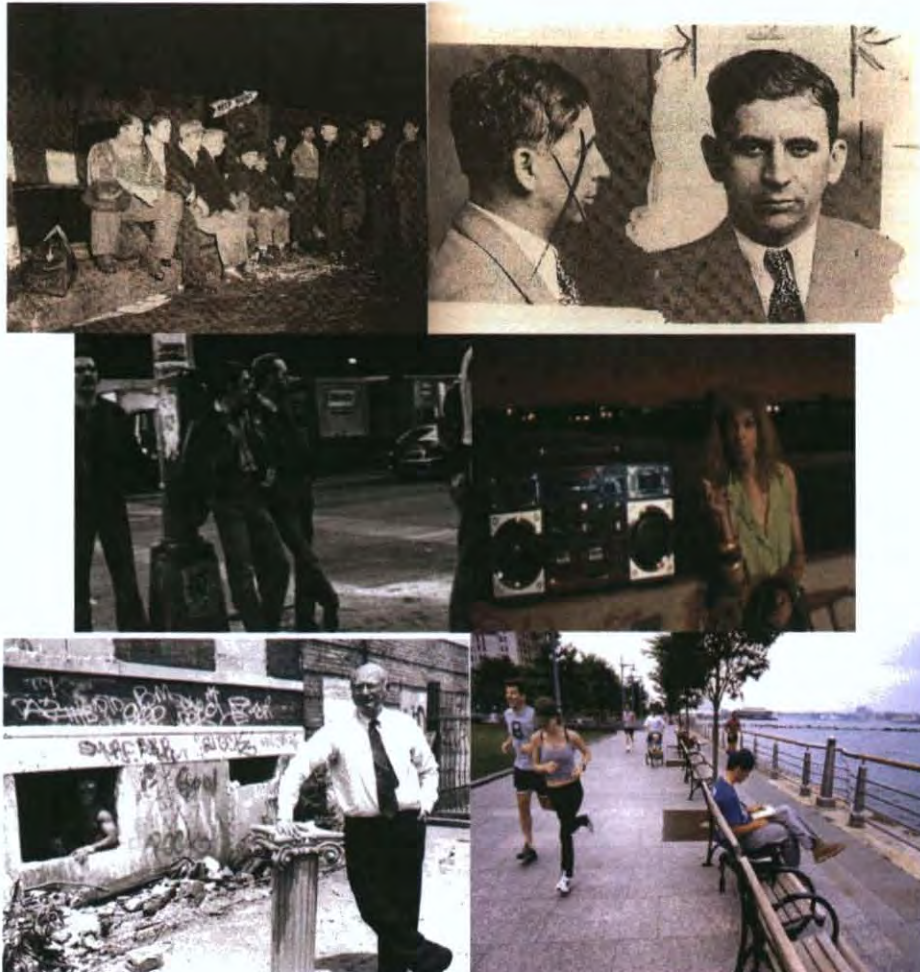


Fig 1.6: (from top left)- The longshoremen; the mafia; the homosexuals (with the trucks behind); the gay street kids (Venus Extravaganza); an example of the Reformer (Mayor Ed Koch 1978-1989), and the female on the waterfront today.

A Westward Migration

Although each of the colonies existed on the waterfront for differing reasons, there is an over-riding trend of movement towards the waterfront, which is independent of a searching-for or attraction-to the marginal zone of the border. The draw exists at the core of what Herman

Melville³³ meant when he wrote, '*nothing will content [New Yorkers] but the extremest (sic) limit of the land... there they stand- miles of them- leagues... here they all unite*' (Melville 1851). Within the period of the second wave of colonists- the 1960s-70s (the homosexuals), was a wave of exploration in America, the flower children were going to San Francisco and in 1969 an American first walked on the moon. A concept of migrating colonies within the urban environment was agreeable with this trend, as Joan Didion wrote of the time '*Manifest Destiny*³⁴ was an almost palpable notion' (1979). When the *Village People* sang '*Go West*' in 1979, the waterfront had become an *American Frontier*. This concept was summed up in Saul Steinberg's cover for *The New Yorker* magazine in March 26 1976, with his drawing *View of the World from 9th Ave.* (fig 1.7), which places the waterfront and the Hudson River as the frontier to the American continent.

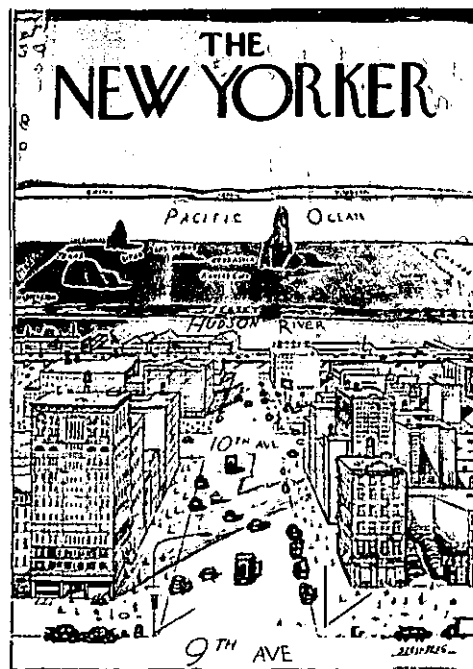


Fig 1.7: Saul Steinberg's *View of the World from 9th Avenue*, cover of *The New Yorker* magazine, March 26, 1976

³³ Incidentally Melville worked as a customs inspector on the Gansevoort Peninsula, (Pier 52), in the late 19th century, (during and after writing *Moby Dick*). Melville was the nephew of Peter Gansevoort a Colonel in the American Revolution, whom had a fort named after him in 1812, at the waterfront end of what was consequently called Gansevoort Street and Peninsula.

³⁴ *Manifest Destiny* was a political belief that justified the annexation of the western colonies of the United States, as ordained by God as a divine right; first used in the 1840s.

Context of Research

This trend of humanity annexing the waterfront is the core conclusion to the dominant published texts on the New York waterfront. Anne Buittenwieser, Kevin Bone and Raymond W. Gastil³⁵ credit the water-ward march as the reason for development of the Hudson River Park and other greening waterfronts in the city.³⁶ However, none of these authors explores the waterfront as existing in a state of colonization or conceding to a dominant gender identity, but they do regard, although do not identify, name or map the waterfront as being socially marginal. This thesis fits within their work, of the humanizing changes on the waterfront.

What this thesis sets out to demonstrate is the power of these colonies in shifting spatial configurations on the waterfront. Through the exploration of these colonies and the masculinities they epitomize, I argue the *zone of abjection* forms a unique understanding of the Greenwich Village waterfront's spatial reconfiguration. In light of the current Hudson River Park's bourgeois condition, it is important to remember its marginal abject origins, as part of New York City's history.

Structure of Thesis

The chapters are divided by particular spatial colonies, which have arisen over the course of research, set out in an approximate chronological sequence. As there are certain crossovers in these colonies, I attempt to highlight the relationships in the overlaps. The initial section targets *Joe Docks*, as the historic norm on the waterfront, and includes the colonization

³⁵ Anne L. Buittenwieser is the author of *Manhattan Water-Bound: Manhattan's Waterfront from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (1999). She is president of the Parks Council of New York City. Kevin Bone edited *The New York Waterfront: Evolution and Building Culture of the Port and Harbor* (2004). He is an associate professor at Cooper Union.

Raymond W. Gastil is the author of *Beyond the Edge: New York's new Waterfront* (2002). He is Executive Director of Van Alen Institute.

³⁶ However, neither examines the colonies of homosexuals or Street Kids.

of the waterfront by the parasitic colony of *The Gangsters and Shylocks*. They feed off Joe Docks, so their stories are entwined. Followed by the spatial convertors *The Clone*, then the re-emergence of *The Legendary Children* who re-appropriated the piers. *The Reformer* exists across the entire spectrum while the colony was at work and hence is interwoven in each chapter. The final chapter *The Mamas*, are regarded as the final (for now) spatial occupants. Their position is closely related to gentrification and so their presence on the waterfront is interwoven. Therefore we have four sections of discussion, which dissect the colonies and form the core of the thesis. Each section's concluding observations are gathered at the end of the thesis coalescing in a single argument.

Methodology

Maps

The initial method of investigation of the New York waterfront centered on maps of the area; taking maps from different time periods and overlaying them in order to physically note the changes in streets, water line, piers, buildings and uses. I began with maps from the 1940's, (the most easily available initially) and then requiring further explanation of features, went right back to maps that demarked the area as marsh land, then farming, and settlement etc. as the city expanded and infill pushed out the edges of the city. Maps were sourced by spending time in the Municipal Archive of New York, The Museum of the City of New York and the purchase of maps from the New York Department of Buildings. *Manhattan in Maps: 1527- 1996* (Augustyn and Cohen 1997) was invaluable. A number of maps were also sourced online where they were available as open source material. Maps were used to understand pier conditions- vacancy, dereliction, ownership and indicating the piers affected by the *Westway* project. Maps of the location of gay bars and establishments in New York were gathered following the process used by Castells (1983) in San Francisco and Levine (1984) in New York.

Photographs

By November 2007, it was noted that certain data was continuously being included in maps even though its existence had altered- collapsed piers for instance. It was necessary therefore, to also research photographs that could be dated to match the maps, so they could be contrasted and the anomaly be resolved. Photographs were used to both catalogue the spaces of the piers, bulkheads and West Street, as physical structures, but also to establish the gender and identity of the users of those spaces. The photographs by Shelley Seccombe (2008) were particularly useful.

Texts

Alongside this physical investigation, I researched social/ cultural and economic/ political shifts in New York City, prompted by changes in photographs and maps, as a means of explanation for the physical changes to the urban environment- why the piers were abandoned, collapsed and eventually became park. Fictional accounts of the piers, in literature and film led credence to conclusions that were appearing in photographs and maps and were used to develop socio-cultural timeframes of change. Legislative text and economic figures led to another set of overlapping time frames. Part of the method of research was finding these timeframes, explaining them and overlaying dates with maps in order to document the change. This produced a map of the piers as a time-graph (fig 1.8).

Importantly for the research of 1970s, were representations of the waterfront in contemporaneous fiction, as there was a concentration of gay fiction set in New York in that decade, all covering the same themes and locations. This allowed for an accurate determination of actual locations as each writer describes the real waterfront condition at that time.

Also of use in determining gender and social identity on the waterfront was witness testimony; gathered predominantly from documentary film work on the subject of gay sex and the cultural activity of New York's under class. These included *Gay Sex in the 70's* (Lovett dir. 2006), *Style Wars* (Silver dir. 1983) and *Paris is Burning* (Livingston dir. 1990). Other witness accounts were sourced from the non-fiction work of Carter (2004), Picano (2007), Kaiser (1997), Johnson (2005 [1948]) and Schulberg (2005 [1954]).

Selection of Texts

As there is an overwhelming amount of written text on New York City- its development, its current state and its future- it was essential for me to narrow my range of writers whose texts I consulted, read and referenced; as was the case for general Urban Studies. I initially chose a small core of noted writers- Jacobs (1961), Picano (1979), Burrows and Wallace (1999)- whose work I was familiar with, and from their notes and bibliographies I expanded my reading. This in some cases led to going *off topic*, as was noted by my supervisors, but in most cases reinforced concepts I was trying to demonstrate, and directed me to sources that expanded the opinions I solicited. In approaching the waterfront of New York, there is already a body of work exploring its historical development and the topic itself is not uncharted terrain, most notably in Ann Bütünwieser's *Manhattan Water-Bound* (1999) and Kevin Bone's *The New York Waterfront*, (2004). I do not intend to duplicate their findings other than in the use of those findings to establish new connections.

The documentation produced by the city and state of New York- working papers, regulations, legislation, reports and plans that relate directly to the waterfront or could be understood as having an inadvertent affect- were an invaluable source. As research progressed further legislative reading was required to include broader government initiatives across the spectrum of the city as a whole.

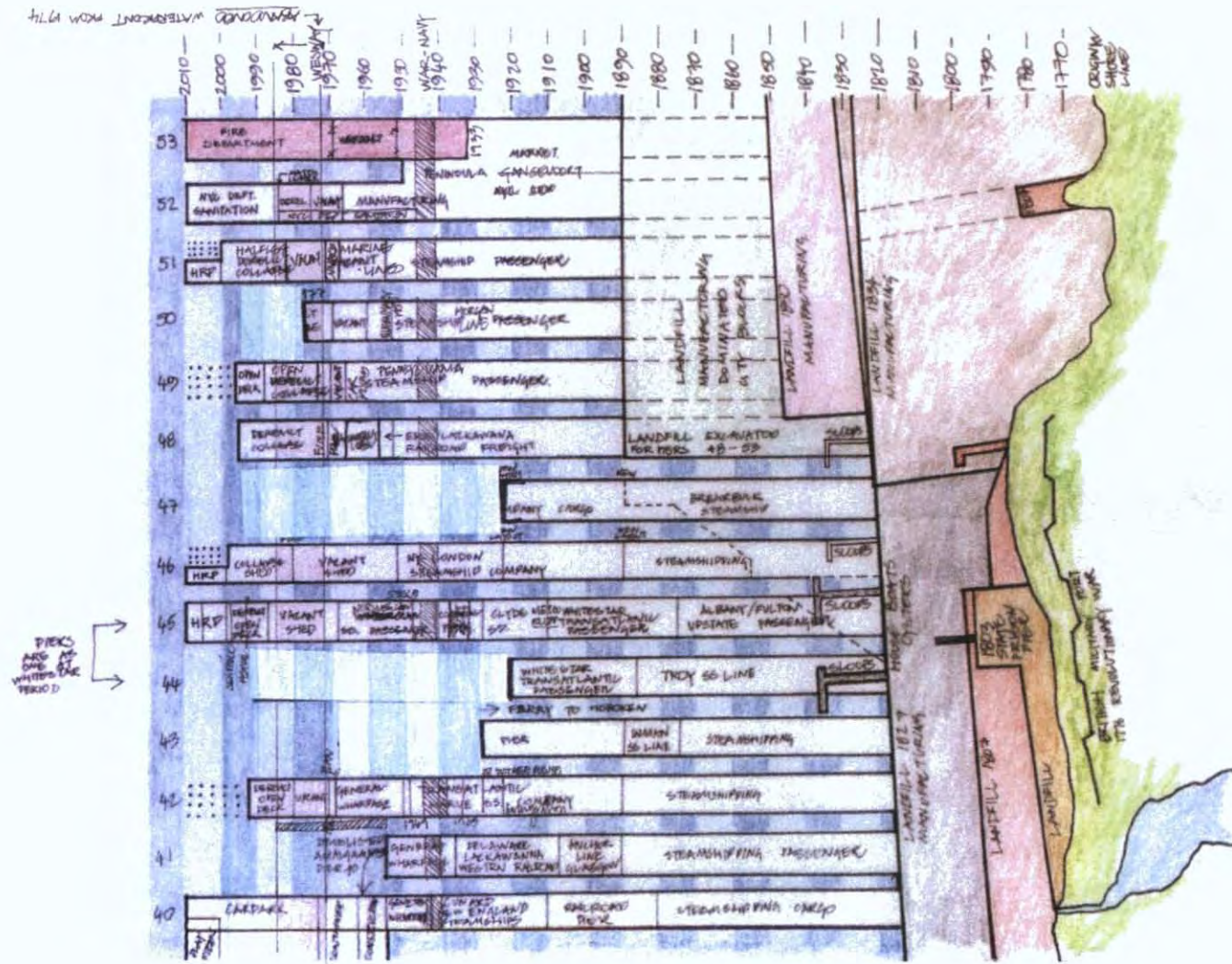


Fig 1.8: Waterfront as time-graph.

3.0 MR. JOE DOCKS VS. THE GANGSTERS AND SHYLOCKS

'New York's great waterfront.... has been aptly described as an "outlaw frontier"'

Malcolm Johnson, *The Sun*, November 8, 1948

'The waterfront is a jungle'

Teddy Gleason, as quoted by Schulberg,

The Saturday Evening Post, September 7, 1963

The *old*¹ waterfront of Greenwich Village (fig 3.1), was undoubtedly a place of fascination, mystery and intrigue; located as it was on the '*island at the center of the world*' (Shorto 2004); with thousands of immigrants daily entering the new world on its shore and where thousands of longshoremen toiled at work '*vital to the nation*' (Schulberg 2005 [1954]: 233) all day and night on the never-closing piers. Imports and exports crossed the American border there and the romance of far off places existed amongst the horse drawn carts:

BEATRICE: ... *[To Eddie]* I smelled coffee all day today. You unloadin' coffee today?

EDDIE: *Yeah, a Brazil ship.*

CATHERINE: *I smelled it too. It smelled all over the neighborhood.*

Excerpt from *A View from the Bridge*, (Miller 2000, p. 21)²

¹ Using the term '*old*' to mean the waterfront as a working dock.

² Although Arthur Miller sets *A View from the Bridge* in Brooklyn, it exists as a story across the whole New York waterfront.

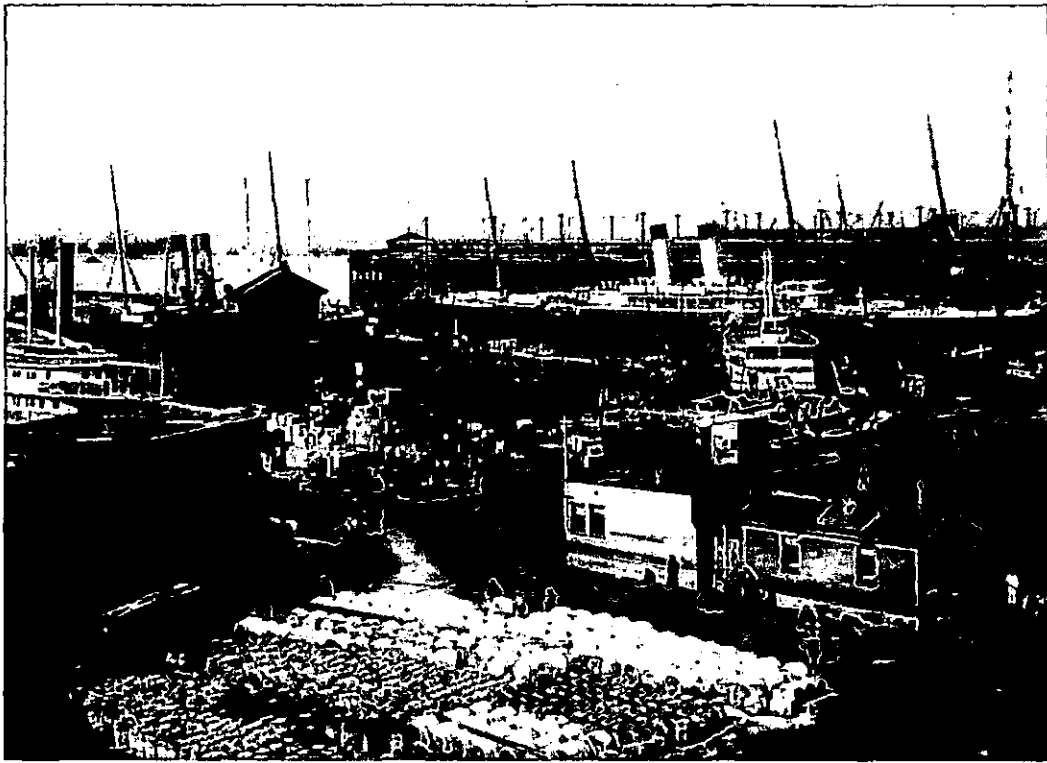


Fig 3.1: Pier 46 and 47 and West Street, at the foot of Christopher Street. Circa 1900.

It was a world onto itself on the edge of the city '*rimmed off from the rest of the city by a steel-ribbed highway and a wall of bulkhead sheds*' (Bell, 1962, p.175). And in this protected, almost autonomous world the waterfront existed under the constant occupation of its environs by various groups, all exerting their own ideology on its physical structure. They existed as layers of natives and colonizers whose stories are interlocked:

- **Mr. Joe Docks-** *the native* base point on the working waterfront, the longshoremen were a continued presence there from its inception to demise.
- **The Gangsters and Shylocks-** a parasitic colony whom multiplied and thrived through violence and exploitation on the waterfront.
- **The Reformers-** a colony of re-order, consisting of city departments and agencies, which attempted to improve, change and eventually unsuccessfully save the working waterfront.

Mr. Joe Docks

Budd Schulberg's articles in the early 1950s, presented the stevedores, dock workers, longshoremen and workers as the historic axiom on the West Village waterfront:

'You whiz by him on the West Side Highway but you don't see him... But his muscles move your groceries and your steel; he carries your baggage on his back... He is the man who performs the most dangerous work in America.' *'He is the longshoreman, the dock walloper... the forgotten man in the great city of New York, the forgotten man of American labor'* (Schulberg, 2005 [1952], p. 201-202).



Fig 3.2: Joe Docks working on the Hudson River waterfront 1912.

His³ placement on the waterfront was the norm (fig 3.2). He has existed there on the waterfront since 1807, when Robert Fulton first launched his new invention the steamship, from the pier of Newgate State Prison;⁴ and began a regular commuter service at, what years later became pier 45 at the foot of Christopher Street. Prior to 1807, Joe Docks dominated the East River piers and Brooklyn, and as fishermen and oystercatchers on the Hudson River. The longshoremen of 1950s lore had changed little since the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which connected the Hudson River with the Great Lakes in the agricultural and industrious Mid-western States, accelerating trade on the West side of Manhattan and switching domination of the New York Harbor from the East side to the West.⁵ In this period of the late 1820s and following decades up until the Great Depression a century later the West side developed into the center of the nation's and the world's shipping industry, with the construction of maritime hotels, factories, warehouses, machine shops, stables, foundries and the construction of new and technically advanced piers.⁶ The Great Depression however, brought disinvestment⁷ to the piers (as with many municipal facilities in the 1930s) and they, although still in extensive use, were falling into disrepair (Freeman, 2000, p. 161).

³ He, because the dockworker was invariably male.

⁴ A vast structure extending from present day Christopher Street to Charles Lane, from Washington Street to the present bulkhead line- that was on 'river front' - before it became a 'waterfront'

⁵ The traverse from East to West on Manhattan Island, of the shipping industry, mimicked the western frontier and the great westward expansion of America. Its as if everything eventually went West, as later in 1956 it went further West again to New Jersey.

⁶ From the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation: The Far West Village and Greenwich Village Waterfront: A Proposal for Preservation to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. September, 2004.

⁷ When even basic investments of upkeep are neglected, capital investments are non-existent and money is withdrawn from investments already in place.

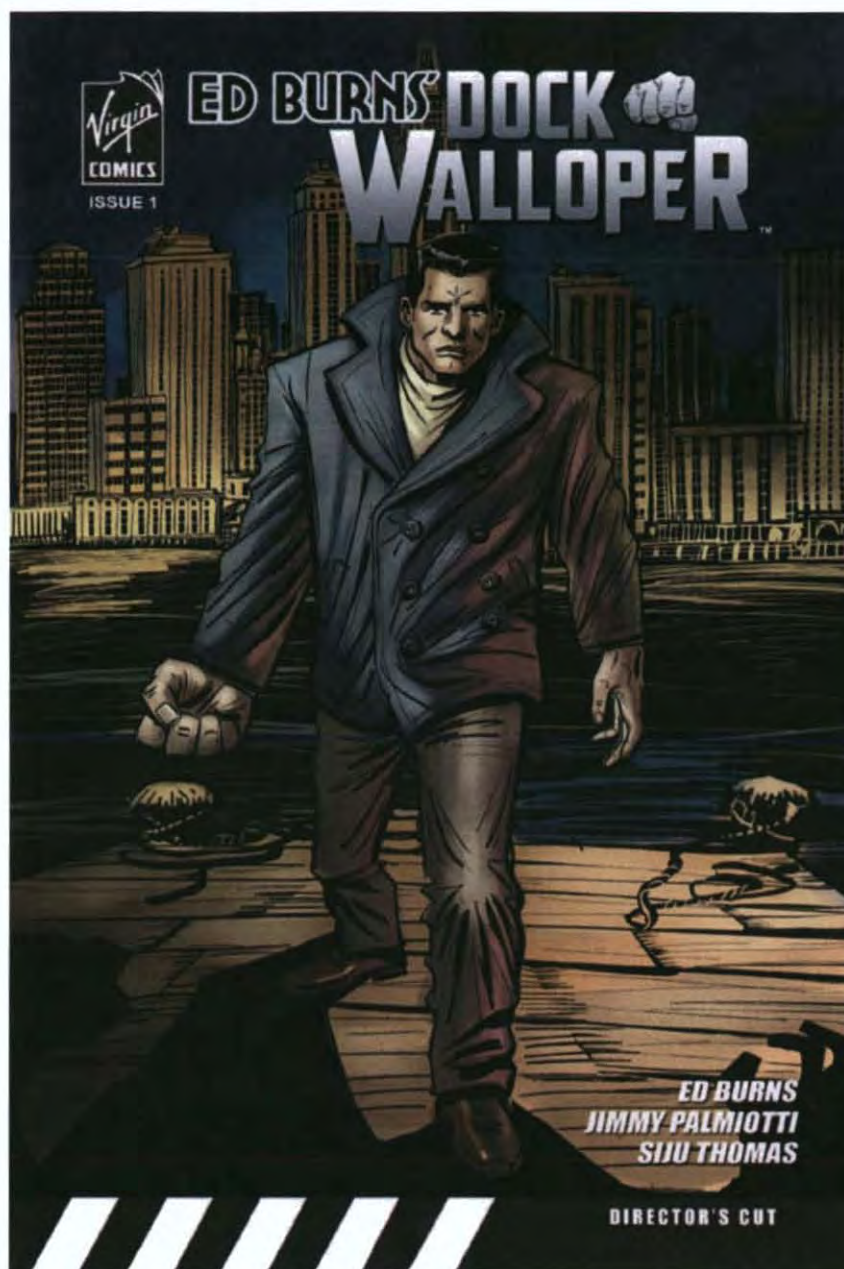


Fig 3.3: The Longshoreman, (Dock Wallower or Stevedore) as popular icon of brute masculinity.

Joe Docks himself however, changed little over time and continued to toil away each day on the busy waterfront. In the 1950s, Bell notes that the waterfront was still '*redolent... of the nineteenth century*' (1962, p. 175), mainly due to the practice of the *shape-up*⁸ (a method for hiring workers each day), which had been banned as a labor practice in the United Kingdom in

⁸ As the '*shape-up*' was one of the tools the gangsters used to control the Longshoremen, it is explained in more detail in that section below.

the nineteenth century (Schulberg, 2005 [1963], p. 269). Joe was a member of his union, The International Longshoremen's Association⁹ (ILA), but still remained predominantly as a casual worker, on menial wages:

'The simplest indicator of the low and unstable income status of a New York longshoreman is that banks and finance corporations do not make personal loans to dockworkers, nor are longshoremen accepted, usually, as low-income tenants in public or private housing projects' (Bell, 1962, p. 180).

This instability and inability to gain credit make it understandable how the parasitic colony of the gangsters and shylocks (loan sharks), were able to gain control and take advantage of the native waterfront occupant and exploit him for profit.

The Gangsters And Shylocks

*A Parasitic Colony*¹⁰

Murray Gurfein, the assistant district attorney for New York in 1941, told a court hearing at the time, that *'no pier in this city is immune from rackets dominated by gangsters'* (Johnson, 2005 [1948], p. 58). On the Greenwich Village waterfront, the *gangster colony*¹¹ was the John 'cock-eye' Dunn mob; an Irish gang who exerted their control through fear and violence. They were a parasitic colony that took over, ruled and robbed this waterfront from 1936 until the demise of the shipping industry in the 1950s.¹² Their study is important, as they are among the instigators of the *abject* on the waterfront and central in its existence as a *zone of*

⁹ The Union was yet another tool of the gangster and will also be discussed below.

¹⁰ As we shall see later, the gangster mob required workers and the shipping industry to exist- exploiting both for profit: they required *occupied* space, unlike later colonies that required *vacant* space. The gangster colony was less concerned by space per se, as the opportunities for profiteering off occupants of that space (leeching).

¹¹ John 'cock-eye' Dunn's Irish mob were present from 1936 until at least 1958, although there was dissolution of the gang after 1949, when Dunn received the death penalty for the murder of Hinz- the stevedore of pier 51; but we should assume other gangs were present before then, but this particular colony began in 1936 and in 1958 the Mob colonizes Idlewild (JFK) Airport and exits the waterfront.

¹² The date of the shipping industries demise will be explored later in this section, and an attempt will be made to date a 'post-shipping' period to highlight the ending of the gangster colony.

abjection. Their crimes led the waterfront of the Village to be regarded as an 'outlaw frontier', (and consequently an attraction to the later colonies of the homosexual).

The Dunn Mob

The piers of Greenwich Village were controlled by an Irish mob run by John M. Dunn, and his brother-in-law Edward McGrath: *'Dunn ruled the waterfront, controlling all piers between Fourteenth and Cedar Streets (fig 3.4). Anybody, [] who got in Dunn's way died, suddenly and violently. It was as simple and as cold-blooded as that'* (Johnson, 2005 [1948], p. 56). They operated through violence, a racketeering and thievery organization, which controlled all the employment of the longshoremen on the piers in their territory. Through methods of fake receipts, and deceptive accounting and weighing of goods, they stole quantities of every shipment that came through the port. Truckers were forced to pay tolls in order to gain access to shipments and to make deliveries. It was *'a racket that has flourished for more than twenty years and which continues to yield millions of dollars annually to the gangsters in control of the piers'* (2005 [1948], p. 26), Johnson wrote in his series of articles on the waterfront in 1948, for the New York Sun Newspaper.

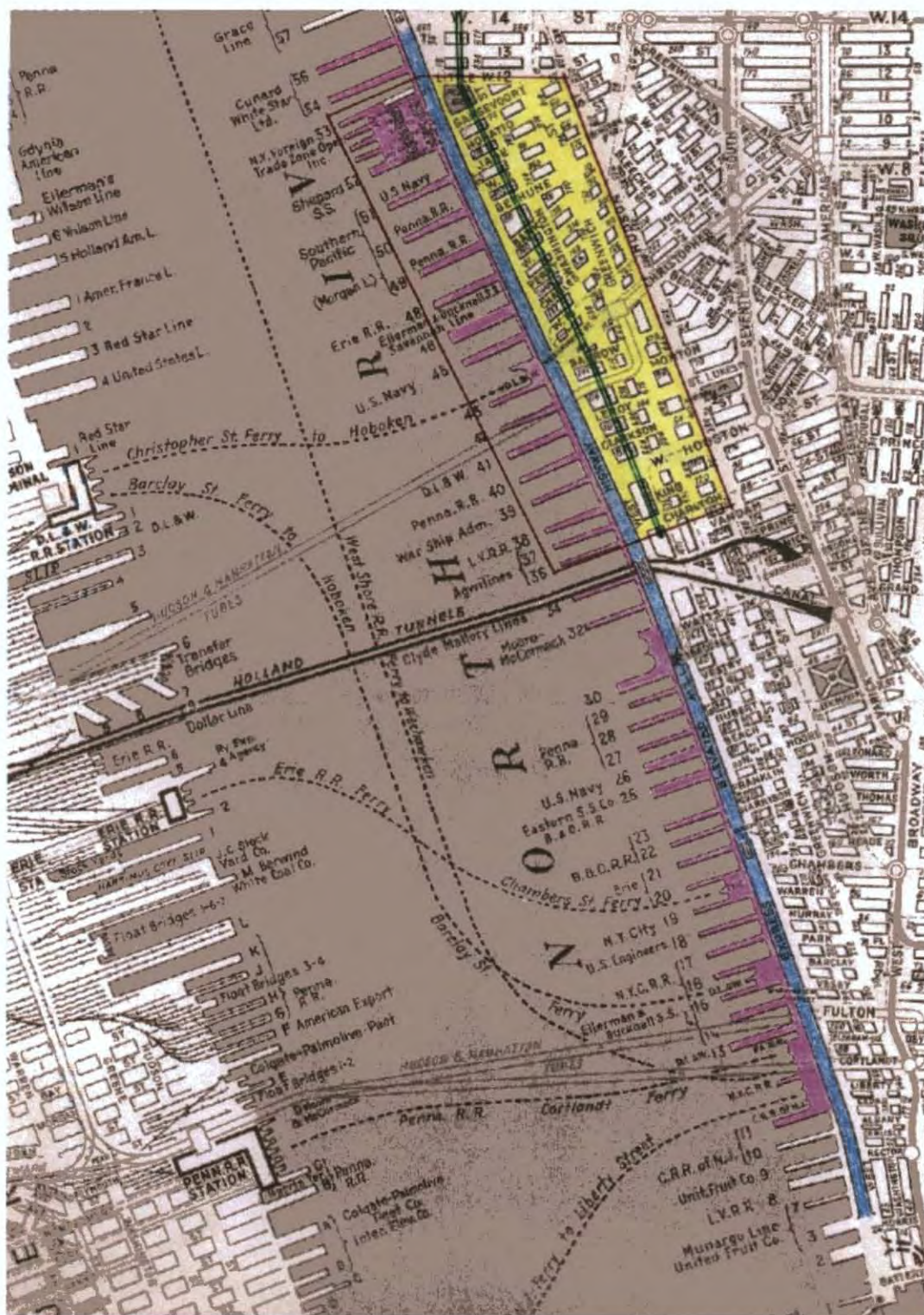


Fig 3.4: The Dunn Mob's territory extends from 14th Street in the North to Cedar Street in the South, covering approximately 47 piers; the elevated Miller Highway is shown in blue, the elevated High Line rail is in green; the area outlined in red is the area concentrated on in this study; in comparison to the New Jersey waterfront, we can see the linear nature of the Manhattan waterfront, and the extent to which it is 'cut-off' from the city, by the highway.

Taking Control

In 1936, Dunn and his mob began taking control of piers on the Hudson River by killing or beating up the hiring stevedores who did not relinquish control:

'In 1936, me [Buster Smith] and George Keeler and Tom Porter had the loading at Pier 59¹³ at Eighteenth Street. Dunn's mob was trying to get control, so they just moved in on us. Dunn and his boys opened up on us one day with pistols and shotguns. I was wounded. A few weeks later, the gang killed Tom Porter and his girl in Long Island City. A month later, the boys knocked off George Keeler at his home in Brooklyn' (Johnson, 2005 [1948], p. 59).

Along with this brute force in colonizing the piers, there were other catalysts that allowed for the domination of gangster in this and the post war period on the waterfront, centering on:

- a) Labor Organization
- b) Ethnicity
- c) Spatial constructs on the waterfront.

a). Labor Organization

Although formed with the best of intentions in 1877, the *International Longshoremen's Association*¹⁴ elected Joseph Ryan as president in 1927, marking a move from control of the organization by members in the Great Lakes, to New York, and in Joe Ryan, (fig 3.5)

¹³ Pier 59 is north of 14th street, outside the final territory of Dunn's gang, so it can be assumed there must have been some blurring of the boundaries to the piers under their control, or indeed, other gangs move in to take over.

¹⁴ The International Longshoremen's Association was a labour union formed to advance the working conditions of the longshoremen in America, with origins that precede American Independence; its main goal was in workers rights, wages, safety, fair working practices and unionized control of all imports and exports on the country's waterfronts. However after the 1935 Wagner Law, granting rights and encouraging union memberships, the labour movement expanded, coupled with the vast numbers of unemployed looking for work during the Great Depression.

corruption, crime and underworld connections,¹⁵ leading to the whole-sale exploitation of union members (*Joe Docks*) by the mob and the mafia (*Gangsters and Shylocks*). Bell refers to the ILA as '*less a trade union than a collection of Chinese warlords*' (1962, p. 182). Joe Ryan was a member of the *Winged Foot Gold Club* in Mamaroneck, Westchester, which was linked to Tammany Hall¹⁶ and the Democratic Party's politicians, judges and business leaders. These connections¹⁷ are what allowed the criminal element take control of the union and waterfront and operate without political or police interference. In the day-to-day waterfront activity all workers on the docks were under the jurisdiction of the union, and all workers had to be members of the union in order to secure work. Organized crime controlled all the unions and hence all the labor on the Village piers, and this allowed it run its racketeering operations under the air of legitimacy. The John M. Dunn gang organized themselves as a workers union, and received a charter¹⁸ from the International Longshoremen's Association for their own new union known as *Terminal Checkers and Platform Men, Local 1346-2*. This union legitimized their colonization of the Village piers.



Fig 5.1.5: Joseph P. Ryan (right), head of the International Longshoremen's Association with rackets boss Anthony Anastasio (left).

¹⁵ In 1951, Ryan was indicted on fifty-one counts of misappropriation of union funds by the Congressional Waterfront Commission, and served on committees with several members of New York's crime families.

¹⁶ The name of the Democratic club in New York, which essentially ran the entire city.

¹⁷ As the unions traditionally supported Democratic candidates in elections (Sites 2003:50), it was essential for Tammany Hall in order to secure votes, leave the unions alone without municipal interference.

¹⁸ John M. Dunn personally knew Joe Ryan, as they both served on several committees together, so granting a charter for Dunn's union by the Ryan controlled ILA was not surprising.

The Shape-Up

The most insidious method of controlling the longshoremen and ensuring the profitability of their enterprise was in the leeching of earnings from *Joe Docks*, through the *Shape-Up* and in loan-sharking (*Shylocks*). The *Shape-Up* was a method of hiring workers, that began each morning on the docks with the mob-appointed *hiring-boss*, selecting who was to get a days work, often involving a *kick-back*. The worker was selected by being handed a union-ticket (brass check) which allowed him to work and then collect his wages at the end of the week; often the hiring-boss would start a violent jostle by merely tossing the tokens in the air and allowing the men fight over them. This was vividly portrayed in Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* (1954) with almost documentary realism (fig 5.1.6).¹⁹

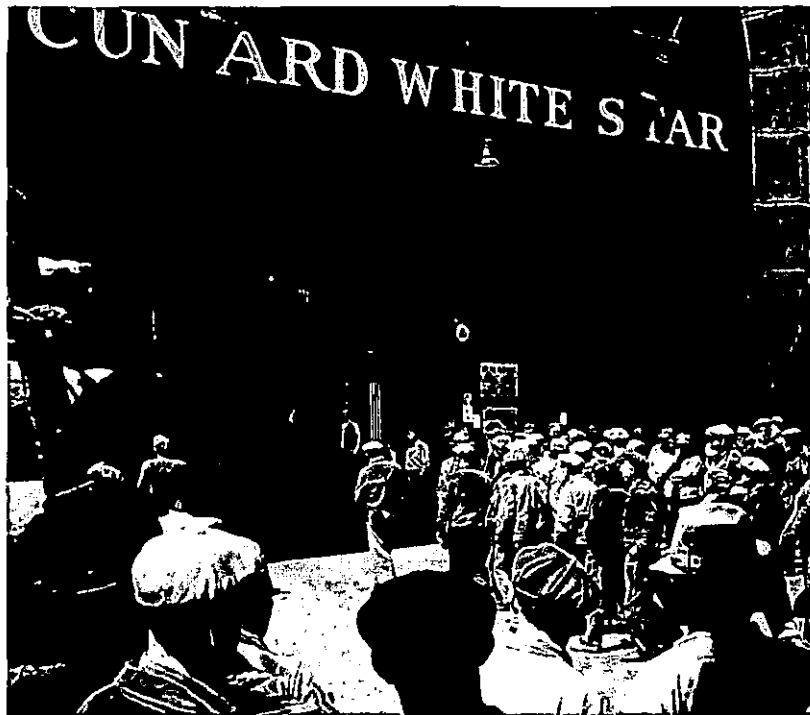


Fig 3.5: Longshoremen gathering around the pier entrance in the hope of being selected for work at Pier 56 in the 1930's

¹⁹ Although *On the Waterfront* (1954) was a Hollywood movie, its has been used as an accurate account of the working conditions on the waterfront in most academic research of the waterfront, for example by Freeman (2000) and Jacobs (1999), as the script was based on Johnson's in-depth investigative articles that appeared in the New York Sun in 1947-48, and in Schulberg's own waterfront investigations during his time writing the screen play.

Johnson in his November 18, 1948²⁰ article summed the shape-up as follows:

'The kickback is common practice, too. Here, the workman simply pays the hiring boss for the privilege of getting a day's work. Otherwise, he doesn't get hired. The rate often is high as 10 percent, sometimes even higher. The mobsters get this money... Here again the method of hiring is blamed- the shape-up, in which the longshoremen gather on the piers daily and wait to be chosen or rejected for work by the hiring boss. The system easily invites graft and favoritism' (2005 [1948], p. 53).

As part of this kickback process there was also the practice of loan-sharking by *shylocks* on the waterfront. As an additional means for the mob to earn money and control the docks, longshoremen were often required to take out loans at high interest from the shylocks, in order to gain access to work on the waterfront (Jacobs 1999) and as mentioned above the longshoremen were unable to find credit legitimately. This *colony of the shylock* leeched the earnings of the longshoremen and strengthened their control over *Joe Dockers* and the mob's territory (fig 3.7).



Fig 3.7: In the *shape-up* scene from *On the Waterfront* (1954), where the character *Pop Dugan*, pays off the shylock.

²⁰ As appeared in the New York Sun newspaper, over a 2 year period, Johnson won the Pulitzer Prize for these articles in 1949.

b). Ethnicity

Although we can assume there was crime on the waterfront prior to the John M. Dunn mob, the shift to organized crime can be traced to the shifting ethnic demographic on the waterfront that rose in the later part of the nineteenth century,²¹ which split the crime along the lines of ethnicity- the Italian mafia and the Irish Mob. Both groups dominated/ exploited their own ethnic class. This is most obvious in the predominance of Irish family names in the list of victims, of the Irish mob on the Village waterfront:

Joseph Moran 1941, John White 1948, Jimmy Day, Richard 'the bandit' Gregory 1940, Anthony Hinz 1947, Thomas Cuniff 1941, David Beadle 1939, George Keeler 1935, Thomas Porter 1935, Ray Hoffman 1937, Joe Butler 1938, Farmer Sullivan 1938, Ralph Clements 1937, Edward Kenny 1938, Johnny Costello 1937, Charles Brady 1940, Emil Nizih 1941, Robert Coagnaro 1946, William 'wild bill' Lovett 1923, Dennis Meehan, Peg Leg Longeran, Garry Barry, Eddie Hughes, Mickey Gilligan, Chris Marony, John Crowley, Bill Lynch, Bill Quilty, Rico Brache, Cinders Connolly, bill Gillen, Dan Healy, Charles 'red' Donnelly, James Monahan, Linky Mitchell, Charles 'Charlie the Jew' Yanowsky (compiled from Johnson's articles 1947-48).



Fig 3.8: Ethnic Map of New York 1920, adapted by John B. Taylor for the Lusk Committee; the Far West Village indicated includes the area marked 'E' an Irish enclave, also just North of 14th Street directly above the village, is also Irish. This concentration of the Irish, ethnically explains the location and domination of the Dunn's Mob, on these piers.

²¹ The Irish arriving first in the 1840s (Irish famine) and the Italians arriving in the 1880s (after Italian unification).

The Irish Mob, (John 'cock-eye' Dunn's mob), controlled its own section as described above and the rest of the waterfront was controlled by the Italian mafia, particularly Brooklyn in the same manner as Dunn:

'Cosa Nostra's'²² waterfront power base was the ILA. In the 1940s and 1950s, Brooklyn Local 1814, the largest ILA local in the country, was headed by Cosa Notra capo Anthony "Tough Guy" Anastasio, brother of Albert Anastasia, boss of the Gambino crime family and the "key waterfront crime boss in Brooklyn"... Cosa Nostra used its influence in the ILA to determine who worked on the docks and, most important, which boats were unloaded and when, and which of the waiting trucks were loaded and when. Shippers had to pay off the mob to ensure that their ships were loaded and unloaded and to avoid labor unrest. Furthermore, Cosa Nostra orchestrated extensive and systematic thefts from the shipping' (Jacobs, 1999, P. 12).²³

Schulberg notes however that, *'the Irish longshoremen... have a better deal than their fellow Italians, who in turn, are a niche above the Negroes'* and this hierarchy of Irish domination accounts for the influence of *'certain waterfront priests'* (2005 [1952], p. 203), in challenging the system to win a fairer deal for the dockworkers. Most notably in the portrayal of the priest character in *On the Waterfront* (1954), which was based on the real life Father John M. Corridan.

c). Spatial Constructs on the Waterfront

In charting the area of the gang colony, the most prominent line of boundary is to be found *'cross the shadow line'* cast by the elevated Miller Highway. This demarked the area of the mob's control. It along with the elevated High Line railroad further inland provided two areas that were sheltered from view. Underneath they were dark by day and night, and their

²² The Costra Nostra was an Italian mafia crime syndicate, consisting of several families in agreement with each other

²³ Although Anthony Anastasio and Albert Anastasia were both brothers, Anthony changed the last letter of his name to 'o' becoming Anatasio. He did this to distinguish himself and his crime organization from his brothers.

presence disrupted the flow of warehouses on the streets. This night condition and disruption of the spatial order created marginal zones (figs 3.9, 3.10).



Fig 3.9: The space under the elevated Miller Highway in 1951, the line between the longshoremen and the law (police) is clearly evidenced in this photograph, the longshoreman is hidden under the road, the police exist in the light.

Fig 3.10: is the underside of the underside of the elevated Highline railroad, the shadow cast and the hemmed in nature of the space is defunct, it has no use other than the marginal- car parking in this instance.

These zones provided protection to carry out illegal and violent activity; in essence it enclosed the crime in a wall of secrecy. The piers themselves cut off from the city by the sheds on the bulkhead (fig 3.11) and the Miller Highway were therefore a free-for-all. They were on the *'wrong side of the track'* and hence beyond the pale in terms of legitimate business activity or safe dignified working practices.

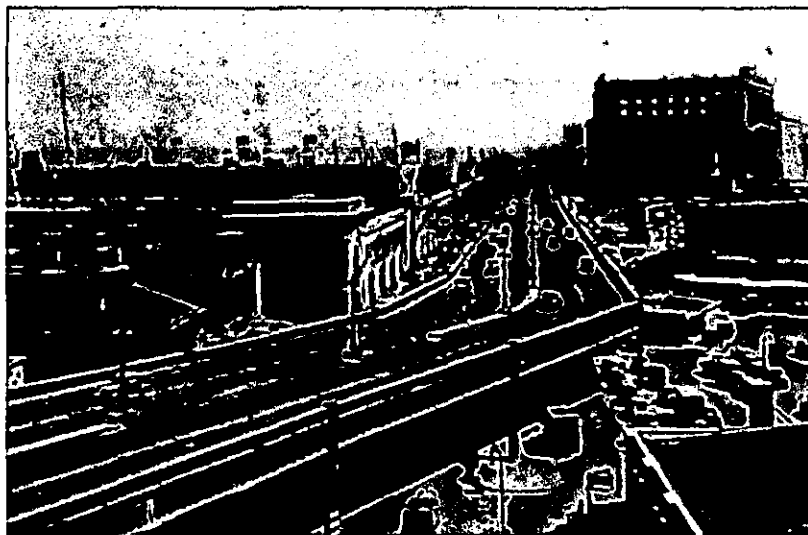


Fig 3.11: The elevated Miller Highway at Little West 12th Street, the shadow cast by the highway is clearly visible on West Street, and the hemmed in nature of the street is indicated by the pier frontage of sheds built on the bulkhead, cutting of the water, and enclosing West Street.

The Municipal Reformer on the Waterfront

In 1870, the Department of Docks was formed and brought all the wharves, piers and waterfronts in New York (Manhattan), under its jurisdiction. In 1898 when Greater New York was formed, Brooklyn, Staten Island and Queens' waterfronts also came under the Department's control. The department's biggest contribution was in the reconstruction of the city's piers and the building of a bulkhead river wall on the waterfront. The Department of Docks can be regarded as the first instance of *The Reformer* intervening in the space of the waterfront. The department performed the tasks of mapping, designing and building the waterfront; it also created substantial landfill, thereby colonizing the river for municipal control as demonstrated in this map from 1873 (fig 3.12).²⁴



Fig 5.1.12: Map of 1873 showing High and Low water marks, original city grants of underwater land made to various parties, 1686-1873; bulkhead line established 1750-1873, and degree of landfill around the island.

²⁴ Kevin Bone in his book *The New York Waterfront*, 2004, extensively examines in detail the plans, proposals and structures built by the Department of Docks, pp. 36- 81

Change is in the Air

The 1930s however, tilted the axis of the domination of the Greenwich Village waterfront, with both construction and renovation stalling due to the Great Depression. The advent of larger ships that came into service in the inter-war years, were more suited to the deeper waters of Brooklyn's and New Jersey's waterfronts, and hence began to ignore the Village piers. It was however the development of roadway connections into and out of Manhattan that served as an early infringement on the use of the Village waterfront in transporting of goods. The creation of The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) in 1921, in a bi-state compact between New York and New Jersey with jurisdiction over shipping (but not the waterfront) and other transportation within a radius of 25 miles of Manhattan, led to the building of three connections across the Hudson River from Manhattan to New Jersey. The Holland Tunnel opened in 1927, the George Washington Bridge opened in 1931 and the Lincoln Tunnel in 1937. This simplified the method of goods transportation around New York; barges no longer needed to crisscross the Hudson River and trucking became the prime method of goods movement. Meanwhile in conjunction with these connections *The Reformer* was involved in alleviating congestion in the city and solving the overcrowding and disorganization of the waterfront.

Prior to 1930, West Street ran along the waterfront between the bulkhead buildings and the first row of city blocks, as a local road serving the piers and industry, but not used by north south passenger vehicular traffic (fig 3.13 over). Congestion on New York's avenues was severe enough at the turn of the century, to promote the consideration of an arterial system to speed north and south traffic on the island of Manhattan, uninterrupted by cross streets. The waterfront was the most reasonable location for such a system, as the waterfront was predominantly under the ownership of the city and there was an absence of residential buildings

to compensate; therefore proposed developments could be framed by economic and commercial arguments.



Fig 3.13: West Street circa 1900; the street existed more as a plaza supporting the waterfront pier sheds, rather than as a North – South thoroughfare.

Buttenwieser refers to this road building on the waterfront as *'thickening the wall'*, because the roads *'restrict[ed] human access to the water'* (1999, p. 157). This restriction was an unintended result, as the planning of such roadways in the 1920s was at least in rhetoric, designed around *'getting folks to water'* (1999: 158).²⁵ After the Saxe Law²⁶ was passed in 1906, requiring the elimination of steam railroads from street level, there was a need to find a new system of transportation along the West side. The at grade railway on Eleventh Street was no longer legally viable and any proposed new design submerged (or elevated) the railway; in

²⁵ Nelson Lewis, Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate and Appointment, as quoted in Buttenwieser, p. 158

²⁶ *'The act of 1906 provided that the Rapid Transit Commission were to prepare plans for the removal of steam railroads at grade in the Borough of Manhattan, and provided for the construction of a subway. If the steam railroads should not accept the proposition submitted, the Rapid Transit Commission was thereafter empowered to condemn the franchise held by the railroad and take up the tracks.'* (New York Times, May 16, 1909)

conjunction with these plans, the need to avoid the intersections of cross streets by an arterial highway, elevated above the street. Between 1910-20, the Department of Docks proposed several schemes, but none were implemented. Then in 1924 Police Commissioner Richard Enright proposed an elevated highway for the West side,²⁷ and in 1926 Manhattan Borough President Miller prepared another elevated plan to be built on city land on the waterfront. This project did go ahead and construction was authorized by the State legislature later that year. This Miller plan, (and name of the highway) reserved street level for trucks and access to the piers, with the north/ south car traffic above away from this activity. The Greenwich Village section of the Miller Highway (fig 3.14) opened in 1930. That same year New York renumbered its road system to match the federal Re-naming Act of 1927. The highway was officially called Route 9A. The Miller Highway did not allow trucks or delivery vehicles to use it, so on the ground level of the waterfront the trucking congestion continued. What this elevated highway did create however was a large covered area on West Street fronting the waterfront pier sheds; it darkened and hid the street from view and light, and as we shall see was instrumental in both shipping and post-shipping colonies.

²⁷ As reported in the New York Times, 13 January 1924.



Fig 3.14: elevated Miller Highway, looking south in 1950 at Christopher Street; the elevated Highline rail is to the left.

In response to the trucking revolution of the maritime industry and its benefits to the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, the Department of Docks and the City (acting again as a spatial reformer) proposed and built the High Line railway (fig 3.15) in 1934 to *'try to accommodate the needs of the waterfront industry by allowing goods and materials to be transported directly, above the crowded streets, to and from industrial buildings'* (GVSH, 2004, p. 4). The High Line ran from the Hudson Rail Yards (Penn Station railway line), sweeping up adjacent to 10th Avenue and then along Washington Street, terminating just south of Charlton Street (adjacent to pier 40). It marked the last reform attempt for several decades, and like the elevated Highway darkened and hid parts of streets and building lots, creating privacy for illicit activity.



Fig 3.15: The elevated Highline railroad in the late 1930s, seen here going through the Bell Laboratory (later the Westbeth Apartments), for direct cargo service, (corner of Greenwich and Bank St.), note the shadow on Bank Street at the bottom of the image.

The Waterfront Zone Of Abjection

We have established the longshoremen as a waterfront axiom in a lowly position of job insecurity, his social position noted by Miller in *A View from the Bridge* (1955), as the bottom rung- 'they're practically longshoremen' (1955, p. 19), is uttered with disgust. He had an affinity for drinking and hanging out in bars, (*The White Horse Tavern*²⁸ on Hudson Street was especially popular as was *Sonny's West Shore Bar and Grill*²⁹, opposite pier 45 on West Street). Schulberg notes 'the bars [became] a kind of overflow living room for men only,' where 'the old saw of "Father, dear Father, come home with me now" [was] not entirely anachronistic on the streets near the river' (2005 [1954], pp. 262-263). He frequented maritime hotels (*Great Eastern Hotel* at 180 Christopher Street; *Keller Hotel* at 150 Barrow; *Holland Hotel* at 305 West 10th Street and *American Seamen's Friend Society Hotel* at 113-115 Jane Street³⁰). These were insalubrious establishments with its transient population of sailors and dock wallopers. Adding to this was *Joe Docks* involvement with *bad girls*³¹ his cheating wife or suicidal prostitute dressed in *borrowed* sequence from the silent film *The New York Docks* (1928), where the women ran *fast and loose* and the men were dirty, rugged and tough. Their behavior could be understood as a succession of the early nineteenth "sprees"- *nighttime forays into the city's brothels, rum holes, and oyster shops that often ended in drunken brawls*' (Burrows and Wallace, 1999, p. 402). Joe acted like the construction worker of the period whom 'deliberately flouted middle-class notions of decorum by wearing rough work clothes as a badge of honor' (Freeman, 2000, p. 246); but *Joe* was the waterfront native, and so any decorum was his own-

²⁸ It would later become connected with the Beatniks and a literary scene after it is believed Dylan Thomas died from alcohol consumption whilst sitting at table in the Tavern.

²⁹ *Sonny* was Sonny Thompson lieutenant in Dunn's Mob; union representative and bar manager.

³⁰ The American Seamen's Friend Society Hotel, which fronted the waterfront at Jane Street, was where the rescued survivors of the Titanic were taken 4 days after the her sinking on 14 April 1912.

³¹ The term 'bad girl' contrasts with 'good time girls', the designation depending on one's perspective, but both employing trouble and possibly prostitution.

the waterfront created its own norm on the edge of civilization- a marginal zone, a proxy DMZ³² between the city and the great expanse of the Hudson River.



Fig 3.16: *Querelle* (Fassbinder dir. 1982); the waterfront is depicted in perpetual dusk and the piers are the very embodiment of the masculine, being built to resemble the penis.

As a metaphor for the longshoreman as social fringe several cultural depictions of the waterfront cast it in perpetual night, fog³³ or dusk- *the twilight zone*; *The Docks of New York* (dir. Sternberg 1928); *Hamnstad* (dir. Bergman 1948); *On the Waterfront* (dir. Kazan 1954); *Querelle* (dir. Fassbinder 1982) fig 5.1.16; and *The Dock Walloper* (graphic novel) (Burns 2007). The fog like the night provides a *cover of darkness* for bawdy, drunken and sexual activity- '*Are you goin' to let me have a good time in my own quiet way- or must I take this place apart?*' (Sternberg), the longshoreman asks after drinking direct from a barrel of beer and before throwing that barrel at a barkeep attempting to reign in his behavior (fig 3.17). This *night* condition was sustained on the Village waterfront during daytime, by the shadow cast and concealment provided by the elevated Miller Highway and Highline railway- zones of perpetual night were created and these sustained the concept of the marginal³⁴ on the waterfront. This can

³² Demilitarized Zone- the waterfront was neither civilized city, nor wilderness but a perceivably autonomous zone on the border, *seemingly* under no municipal control.

³³ The cinematic allure of Fog on the waterfront as a metaphor for its marginality, is in spite of Bell's assertion that New York port owes its dominance in part to '*rarely foggy waters*' (1962: 177)

³⁴ Lynch notes that in medieval Florence '*it was assumed that only criminals were out at night*' (1988 [1972]: 81) and that assumption remains in the dark recesses of the waterfront.

be understood within Butler's (1993) theory on domains of abjection; '*constituting zones of uninhabitability, which a subject*³⁵ *fantasizes as threatening*' (1993, p. 243); it is a lowlife '*atavistic world*' (Bell, 1962, p. 175), of rape, beatings, drunkenness, dirt, grease and sweat on the waterfront. (It should be noted, this world existed prior to the layer of gangster colonization applying itself to the Village waterfront).

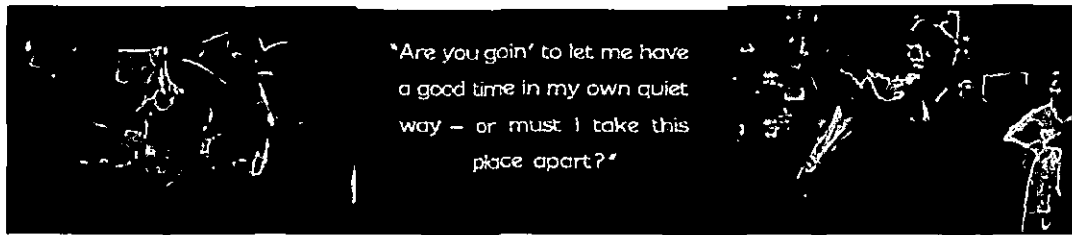


Fig 3.17: The drunken bar scene from *The Docks of New York* (1928), the longshoreman drinks, barks and fights

The abjection of the longshoremen extended to include his wife and family. *Mrs. Joe Docks*³⁶ existence, whom resided in her own interior world, close *to* but not actually *on* the waterfront. Dolly Mullins- *Mrs. Joe Docks*- a longshoreman's wife who rented an apartment in 1954, '*on the second floor of a shabby tenement*' on West 11th Street (around the corner from Ms. Meier),³⁷ '*the kind landlords abandon to their fate*' (Schulberg, 2005 [1954], p. 254), for \$26.30 a month- whose '*walls along the stairway and narrow corridors are cracked and stained... there is natural light only in the front room*³⁸... *the wallpaper and linoleum of the other rooms were dirty and worn*' (p. 255), and a toilet was shared amongst several families. This alone did not imply these longshoremen families resided amongst the abject- it is '*not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection, but what disturbs identity, system, order*'

³⁵ The 'subject' in this instance is represented by the civilized social norm- in simplistic philosophical terms, the subject is that which is regarding an object, however in Kristeva's (1982) theory of the abject, one becomes the subject (the independent self) only through abjecting (regurgitating in horror) oneself in rejection of the mother. The zone of abjection then causes a disturbing recoil from that place (the waterfront) by the 'normalized' social self.

³⁶ Budd Schulberg writing in *Cosmopolitan* in March 1954, interviews Mrs. Helen "Dolly" Mullins, and refers to her as the generic *Mrs. Joe Docks* to describe the lives of the majority of longshoremen's wives living close to the waterfront.

³⁷ The wealthy daughter of the architect Richard Meier, who has designed three luxury condominium towers on the waterfront, between West 11th and Charles street- this is noted to indicate the stark contrast between the 1950s and 2008.

³⁸ Contrast this lack of light with Carol Prisant in 2008 who '*wonderfully, had to wear sunglasses at noon*' when in the living room of Ana Meier's waterfront apartment, due to an over abundance of daylight when interviewing her for *World of Interiors* (March 2008)

(Kristeva, 1982, p. 4) but *Mrs. Joe Docks*' tale that '*the flat was overrun with rats so large that the cat, Tim [Mr. Joe Docks] brought in to cope with them was bitten to death*' (2005 [1954], p. 255)- this break down in order, the *rat eating the cat*, instead of the *cat eating the rat*, was a breakdown of the natural order and thus abject- placing all aspects of the postwar longshoreman's existence in a zone of abjection.

It is not surprising therefore that an organized crime element, in the form of *gangsters and shylocks*, would colonize under the highway³⁹ in this masculine '*lawless frontier*'. The crime merely added another layer to the zone of abjection, because '*any crime... is abject*'⁴⁰ (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4) adding to the disruption of city's social order on the waterfront. Within in this state of near anarchy, it is possible to contemplate how the dockworkers tolerated⁴¹ the criminal interference and manipulation on the waterfront. They simply had no other choice, '*the idea is to keep the men poor. Then they can be controlled more easily, controlled through fear- fear of not working and fear of being unable to pay the shylocks*' (Johnson, 2005[1948], p. 53).



Fig 3.18: Marlon Brando as the archetype masculine longshoreman, and Lee J. Cobb as the archetype masculine gangster.

³⁹ John Dunn's mob colonizing 5 years after the highway construction and 2 years after the Highline construction.

⁴⁰ Kristeva distinguishes heroic crime (say a revolution) from crime that is premeditated, '*immoral, sinister, scheming and shady*'- that is orchestrated organized crime- the treachery of the gangster.

⁴¹ They practiced D'n' D, deaf and dumb when interviewed by the police or FBI about waterfront crimes.

The Cowboy Myth

By positing the longshoreman as a cowboy- the enduring '*symbol of American masculinity*' (Blazina, 2003p. 49)⁴² we highlight his ruggedness and position on the frontier. Blazina places the origins of the cowboy myth in the earlier frontier's man- Lewis and Clark exploring the western wilderness, and the cowboy as the *tamer* of this wilderness- '*typically portrayed... as a white male no older than his mid-thirties, lacking formal education but schooled in... physical toughness*' (p. 50), the *Marlboro man*. Wright places his mythical allure, in his opposition to the industrialization of America, because he was '*detached from social order*' and had '*the skills of the wilderness*' (Wright, 2001, p. 7)- the manual loading of cargo by Joe Docks was one of the few labor intensive elements left in the industrial process. This '*detachment*' places the longshoreman outside of the civilities of the social norm. He exists on the margin, in a state of abjection.

When *Father Barry* (played by Karl Malden) warns *Edie Doyle* (Eva Marie Saint) '*this is no scene for a girl to see*' in *On the Waterfront* (1954), it is easy to assume it is to shield her from the men fighting over brass checks in the daily skirmish of the shape-up- a convent educated girl should not see such brutality (fig 3.19).



Fig 3.19: Father Barry tells Edie Doyle- '*this is no scene for a girl to see*'

⁴² Blazina portrays the cowboy as a middle-class symbol, however it is equally as prevalent in the upper classes- in Ralph Lauren's style and as embraced by George W. Bush to appeal to America's working class voters.

However, the scene can be understood as wishing *Edie*, not to see the subjugation of the male by the mobsters, as it marginalizes their social position and lessens their stature as the family breadwinner. The brass checks the men were forced to almost beg for, were turned in at the end of the day in order to get paid, but as Bell (1962) notes, brass checks were how prostitutes were once paid and hence the reality of degradation and feelings of abjection by the longshoremen was understandable. They were being forced to the same level of those perceived to be of even lower status- the prostitute.⁴³

As we have discussed the mob's methods were abject- deceiving, premeditated, cunning, violent, criminal- they represent a breakdown in order through corruption of the forces meant to protect man- the police, the union, the government. This power, and the use of this power to force the submission of Joe Docks, he has no control over his daily life, his income, his work, even his bodily safety; '*the shame of compromise, of being in the middle of treachery*' (Kristeva. 1982, p. 2) is abject.

⁴³ the mafia also controlled prostitution rings and acted as neighborhood pimps

The Decline Of The Colony

The End of the Shipping Era

While it is difficult to pick a start date for such an inauspicious era as the *post-shipping* waterfront, it is possible to identify contributing factors over many previous years, which culminate in specific actions that flip the waterfront condition. The three factors, which were instrumental to the overall change of shipping on the West side, are:

1. Piers Conditions and waterfront infrastructure.
2. Port Developments across the region and shipping industry.
3. Organized Crime and Gangster involvement in port activities.

From these I conclude that April 26, 1956 marked the tipping point of the shipping era; the date of the container ship's maiden voyage, from Port Elizabeth in New Jersey.

1. Pier Conditions

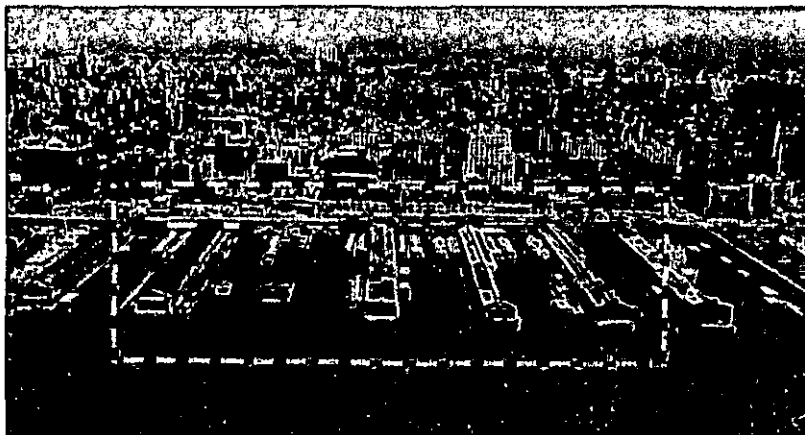
Despite a City (the Reformer) investment of \$45 million (\$249 million approximately in today's money) by the mid 1950s, (the city owned and operated the Village piers, through the Department of Marine and Aviation), their condition was poor.⁴⁴ The wood piers, which were prone to fire and erosion, were decaying; the victim of freeze/ thaw action, which caused the wood to split in the winter and fail in the melting spring, was requiring continuous investment for maintenance. A further investment of \$5,214,838 (approximately \$28, 890, 202 in today's money) was instituted after a fire on Pier 57 in 1947, to make the underside of the decks accessible through trap doors to fight fires, the installation of concrete firewalls and sprinkler systems. This investment had been made in an effort to reduce insurance premiums, which had

⁴⁴ This invest was a form of infrastructural gentrification. However, such gentrification does not actually cause social gentrification. It only forms a physical improvement in space.

been until then prohibitively expensive to potential tenants due to the perceived fire risk. However, the rent the city charged was itself prohibitive, as it was based on a percentage of the value of the land, bulkhead, pier and a tax figure; the benefit of cheaper premiums were offset by rent expense.

The condition of the piers was as follows:

Pier 40 - The City did attempt to revive the village piers with the building in the late 50s early 60s of the enormous pier 40, an amalgamation of five finger piers (41, 40, 39, 38, 37), for the agreed tenant of the Holland American Line; with parking facilities, cargo handling and services for trans-Atlantic passengers. Although this was an innovative pier, of concrete and with a cathodic protection system to prevent erosion,⁴⁵ it was obsolete almost upon completion. It catered to break-bulk cargo, which had been negated by containerization, which was developed during pier 40's construction. It was clear even then that strategies to deal with changes in shipping could not be enacted quickly enough, as this pier was quickly surpassed by other innovations. Holland American ended its use of this pier within a couple of years and the vast pier sat vacant on the waterfront- a giant emblem of the end of shipping. It was taken over by the Port Authority in 1971 and leased out for car and bus parking (fig 3.21, 3.22).



⁴⁵ *Engineering News Record*, January 1961.

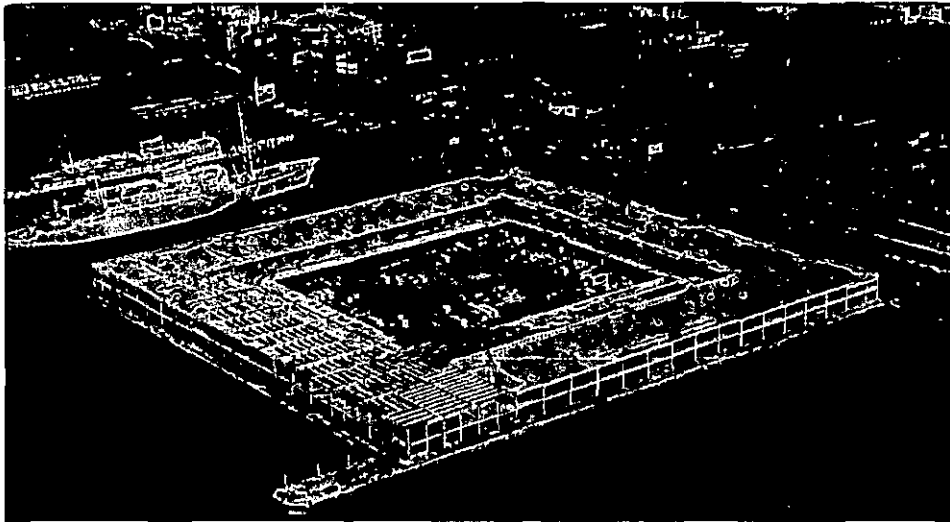


Fig 5.1.21: piers 41, 40, 39, 38, 37 prior to demolition (above) in the mid 1950s; Fig 5.1.22: (below) construction of pier 40 in 1960

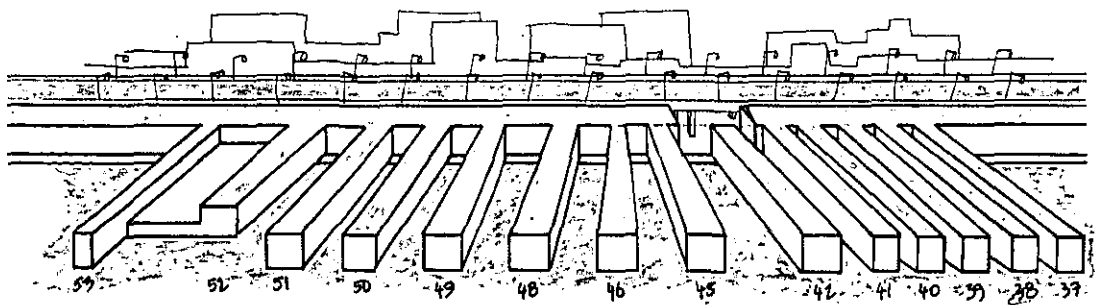
- **Pier 42** was '*unrentable*' due to racketeering in 1948 as reported in the New York Times, December 14, 1948. However by 1949 the city has rented out the piers to the Norwegian American and Grace Lines on a month-to month basis, and by 1953 the pier is rented to Spanish Lines (passenger), again monthly put remains in operation for approximately ten years. It switches to cargo offloading at some point in the 1960s,⁴⁶ before strike action in 1968 ends its viability and it is vacant for good by 1970.
- **Pier 45** was rebuilt in 1955 but remained vacant for 2 years from 1955-57⁴⁷ due to a labor dispute. Hellenic Lines agreed a month to month lease with the city (New York Times, December 17, 1957). It is used by the Norwegian American Line during the 1960s and docks a new ship the *Stavangerfjord* there in 1965. By the end of the decade it is vacant, most likely as a result of the tugboat strike of 1967.
- **Pier 46** was vacant, with no foreseeable tenants, and this was impeding the development of the waterfront, as '*city policy is to hold off building a new pier until*

⁴⁶ the advent of affordable commercial flights began to negate the passenger liner business.

⁴⁷ During this vacancy in 1957 the King of Saud disembarked on pier 45 where he was greeted by a Marine Corp Guard before departing for the meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He was brought to the pier aboard a US coast guard cutter, after transferring from one of a Saudi Destroyer (NYT: Jan 29, 1957)

there is a tenant for it' as reported in the New York Times, August 13, 1953. It is vacant throughout the 1960s and begins to structurally deteriorate.

- **Pier 48-** the Erie Railroad agreed a new 10-year lease with the city from 1956- 1966, after which it was left vacant. In August 1956 the US Navy destroyer FJ Berry docks at pier 48 and the carrier Ark Royal in 1957; (the oblique angled pier 47, had been removed several decades before); is under a 10-year lease to the Erie Railroad until 1966. It is fully vacant in 1969.
- **Pier 49** was also leased to the Pennsylvania railroad, but by 1966 is an NYPD car-impound, continuing as such for several years.
- **Pier 50** was leased by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. The lease had been month-to-month since the 1950s. The pier is last used in the mid 1960s.
- **Pier 51** was rented to The States Marine Lines until 1956. It then became a Cunard cargo pier up until 1966 when strike action ended its run.
- **Pier 52** (Gansevoort Peninsula) the remains of The West Washington Market⁴⁸ buildings were knocked down and a Sanitation Department incinerator was built.
- **Pier 53** remained as a berth for the New York City fireboat (fig 4.3)



⁴⁸ This food distribution market became obsolete with the development of supermarkets, which had their own distribution networks in the suburbs where land rents were cheaper.

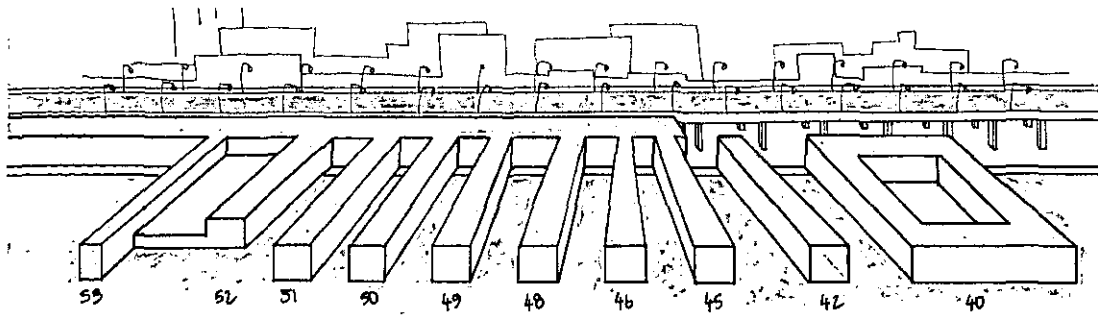


Fig 3.20: The piers in 1956 (top); and in 1962 (bottom); note the elevated Miller Highway standing behind the piers.

The year after pier 40 opened (1963) the City made a final failed attempt at reforming the shipping industry on the West side. The City commissioned a comprehensive plan for the Hudson River waterfront, created by Ebasco Services Inc.⁴⁹ (it became known as the *Ebasco plan*). The plan indicated that the city was still intent on retaining a profitable industrial waterfront, and it retained control of the piers in the hands of the city. However, it was redundant almost immediately upon production in relation to shipping (containerization had become the accepted norm by then) and it was not put into action. The only impact of the *Ebasco Plan*, was the basic outline of the landfill area for Battery Park City in Lower Manhattan, which implies a dual intent by the city to retain shipping in certain areas. The plan was also effectively removing the working port from the Southern region of the West side piers through a process of land expansion (fig 3.23).

⁴⁹ A multinational construction company specializing in large scale infrastructural project- the outcome of the study was obvious.

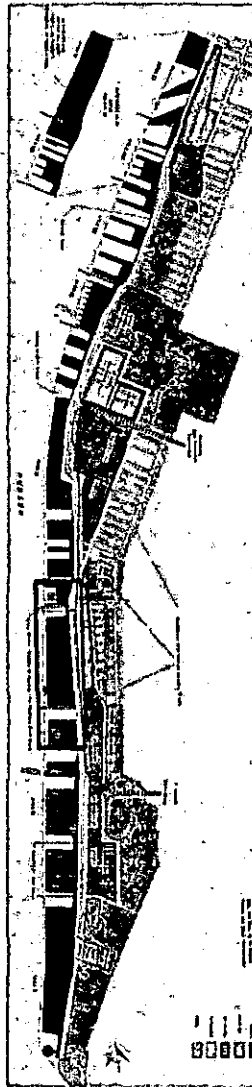


Fig 5.1.23: The Ebasco Plan of 1963, as indicated the shipping industry was to continue on the Village piers

2. Port Developments

Developments across the region in the 1940s and 50s, led to a reduction of Manhattan's domination of the shipping industry, but particularly the West side piers. The expansion and innovations of the Port Authority and the developments in the airline industry detrimentally impacted the shipping industry in Greenwich Village.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's (PANYNJ) wealth⁵⁰ allowed them after World War II to expand their horizons and become more involved in the overall running of the ports and airports in the area. In the 1940s, they proposed a massive renovation of the City owned piers in Manhattan and Newark, as part of a scheme to upgrade the Port of New York. Newark city agreed to the plan, New York City did not.⁵¹ This led to a split in the development of the port, as the PANYNJ had large available funds to modernize facilities and New York City did not (Moss, Portfolio, Summer 1998), leading to the modernization and expansion of Port Newark/ Elizabeth Marine Terminal in New Jersey,⁵² and the denigration of Manhattan's piers.

In 1954, the PANYNJ began to develop container shipping in conjunction with McLean Trucking, as *'a new system for transferring freight from trucks to ships. Rather than unloading truck freight into dockside storage sheds, and then hoisting it "break-bulk" onto ships, the entire truck trailers would be lifted by cranes and stacked on specially designed ships'* (Doig, 2001, p. 375). This negated the *break-bulk*⁵³ as practiced on the West Side piers (fig 3.24). The PANYNJ developed Port Newark/ Elizabeth, as the new center of containerization. Where it had abundant space and links to the interstate road network, the container became the most common form of cargo transportation (fig 3.25). The piers in Greenwich Village meanwhile had neither the space, the infrastructure nor the road connections to benefit from this innovation. Thus those old piers begin to become obsolete; furthermore the City of New York *'did not take containerization seriously'* as an affective means of reform on the docks (Moss, 1998).

⁵⁰ Generated from the tolls of the road, bridge and tunnel networks it built/ operated.

⁵¹ The democratic party in NYC regarded the piers as having a necessary voting block, through the labor unions concentrated there

⁵² Where freight tonnage began increasing by 15% annually by 1955 after modernization (Doig 2001: 375).

⁵³ 'Break-bulk' because it loosely moved goods rather than as a bulk, as a result stealing was easier and prolific.

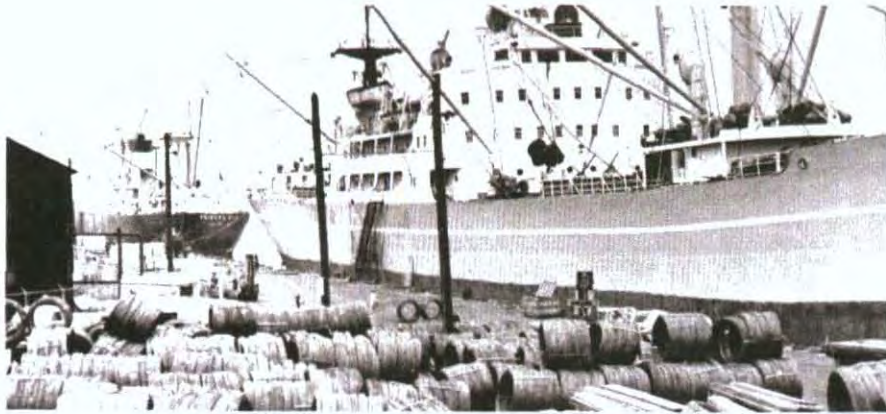


Fig 3.24: Break bulk cargo on the Village waterfront, each item is individually craned aboard -1940 (above).

Fig 3.25: Newark/ Elizabeth Container Port in New Jersey, the extent of space required is clearly visible (New York City is visible to the top right).

Shipping companies, who were also innovating with the PANYNJ, chose Port Newark/ Elizabeth to base their existing and expanding operations (and they could avoid the organized crime in Manhattan); New Jersey had replaced New York in shipping, as demonstrated in the amount of cargo moved between 1959 to 1987, New Jersey rose from 29% of total cargo in the Port of New York, to 72% and Manhattan fell from 23% to 1% of total cargo handled (fig 3.26). Therefore the maiden container ship voyage of April 26th 1956 is the pivotal date that marks an end to the shipping industry in Greenwich Village.

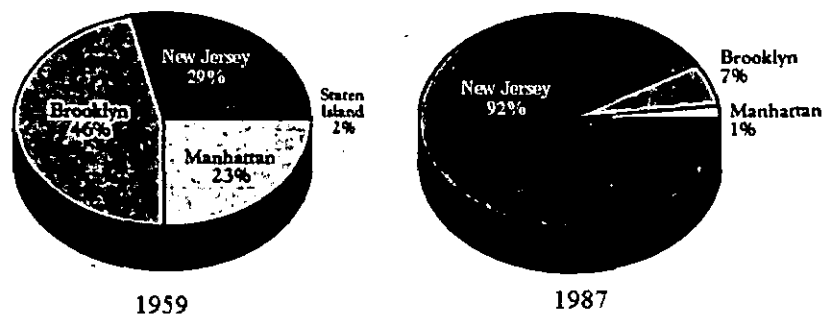


Fig 3.26: Distribution of General Cargo Operations: Port of New York- New Jersey

New York Takes Flight

The Port Authority took over jurisdiction of the cities airports in 1947 in a political agreement, after a protracted battle with the City of New York whom wanted to retain control of the airports but were unwilling to make the massive financial investment in their up-grading. The PANYNJ saw the airports as essential to the overall commercial position of the city and made large-scale investment in their modernization (Doig 2001). Passenger numbers would continue to grow through the 1950s and 60s, eclipsing all passenger travel by sea (except vacation cruising) by the 1970s. Freight cargo expanded and the number of employees jumped as the airport facilities grew to match increasing demand, as demonstrated by Freeman (2001):

Airline Freight:	1960-1966:	airfreight tonnage passing through NY increases 5 fold
	1967:	JFK accounts for a quarter of all foreign trade in the city
Air Travel:	1955:	Equal numbers cross the Atlantic by plane and boat
	1960's:	Plane to boat ratio is 20:1
	1970's:	All travel by plane, except vacation cruises
Airline Workforce:	1958-1969:	employment in air transportation goes from 29,600 to 56,700

The expansion of the airports and passenger travel negated the remaining passenger liners' need for pier rentals in Greenwich Village, notably Pier 42 and the new Pier 40.

2. Organized Crime

As discussed earlier, the organized crime of gangsters and shylocks controlled the waterfront. This crime had a negative effect on the commercial viability of the West side piers. ... Intimidation and racketeering was so widespread that a special Waterfront Commission (*the reformer*) was set up in 1953 to investigate them, after the activities were highlighted in weekly news articles in the New York Sun, during 1947-48, written by Malcolm Johnson. However by the time the commission began investigations and attempted to improve the waterfront, the damage to the Village piers was irreversible; the mob's racketeering was costing shipping companies dearly, with *'losses from cargo thefts run[ing] into millions of dollars annually'* (Johnson, 2005 [1948], p. 15) causing a financial deterrent to the leasing of Village piers. Shipping companies consequently began *'diverting shipping to [] competing ports'* because *'such conditions, do not prevail at other ports'* (p. 25). The problems of increased costs were exacerbated by strikes and labor disputes in, 1941, 1945-1947, 1951, 1955-1957 and throughout the 1960s, as well as the threat of unofficial *wild-cat* strikes that disrupted work regularly. In essence the gangsters are responsible for the death of the shipping industry, their racketeering and thievery drove shippers away, and encouraged the creation of containerization (to protect shipments from theft and false accounting). The mob therefore caused its own downfall, as the profitability of their enterprise waned with the decline of cargo moving through the port of the West side, they had to abandoned their waterfront colony and find other sources of income. The gangster colony moved with the changes and proceeded to colonize the workings of JFK Airport beginning in 1958, with the control of the union Teamsters Local 295 by John McNamara (union president- later prosecuted) and the Lucchese crime family (Jacobs, 1999, p. 48). The colony came, raped and plundered; and then moved on.

The results of the changing shipping industry can be seen in the numbers of men working on the waterfront (Freeman, 2000 and Bell, 1968); the number falls by 86%, as demonstrated:

	YEAR		QUANTITY	% DECLINE year over year
Port Workforce ⁵⁴ :	1946:	60,000 male workers ⁵⁵	60,000	
	1950:	40,000 male workers	40,000	33%
	1954:	over 35,000 male workers ⁵⁶	>35,000	12.5%
	1970:	21,000 male workers	21,000	40%
	1980:	13,177 male workers	13,177	37%
	1989:	8,000 male workers	8,000	39% (86% decline since peak)
Brooklyn Navy Yard:	1944:	yard employs 71,000 ⁵⁷	71,000	
	1965:	yard employs less than 7,000	<7,000	90%
	1966:	yards shuts down, and remains vacant	0	100%

Post-Shipping Era

April 26th 1956 marks the date from which to imply a post-shipping condition, even as some shipping activity continued, its domination had been hindered, and the waterfront was now open to the possibility of other demographic trends. The *working-male* as abject colony on the waterfront had become a relic; a shadow in the vacant spaces of the waterfront.

⁵⁴ Workforce for all of New York City port facilities combined, including the West Side, East Side and Brooklyn

⁵⁵ Bell regards 1946 as the peak of longshoreman employment

⁵⁶ registered with the 1953 Waterfront Commission

⁵⁷ peak during the war years

Conclusion

Joe Docks, the Gangsters and Shylocks as spatial occupiers created a zone of abjection in the perpetual night under the highway on the waterfront. There they inverted identity, system and order by interacting in a violent subjugating manner. This caused abjection in the life of the longshoreman, and the waterfront as being an identifiable zone of abjection.

The mobster's role in the decline of shipping demonstrates the power of colonies (and the absence of law) in the transformation of spatial zones in the city. Attempts by the municipal government to salvage the waterfront and institute reform were undermined by both the power of crime and overtaken by technological advances. The shipping has sailed away, Joe Docks has moved away and the gangster colony has walked away; the piers lie fallow and empty; the docks begin a slow dance of dilapidation and death.

The marginal image remains however- it has become part of the cult of the waterfront- but the *zone of abjection* dissipates along with its habitual occupants- although its abject iconography remains in the image of piers undergoing structural collapse. This cult informs the next wave of colonial adventurers on the frontier of the Far West Village- the cycle of perpetual replacement is complete. The physical decay mirrors its past moral decay, an era has passed and now a void exists waiting to be filled.

4.0 THE CLONE

'A moment before the barge's beam invaded the cathedral we were isolated men at prayer, that man by the font (rainwater stagnant in the lid of a barrel), and this one in a side chapel (the damp vault), that pair of celebrants holding up a flame near the dome, those communicants telling beads or buttons pierced through denim, the greater number shuffling through, ignoring everything in their search for the god among us.'

A scene on the Greenwich Village piers (White, 1978, p. 4)

In the post-shipping era of the waterfront, the piers vacancy and collapse exerted a spatial potentiality on the edge of the city. The vast empty sheds that had been abandoned and forgotten by the city were available for colonization outside of their structural intention. When *Joe Docks* and the *Gangsters*¹ left the waterfront, they were replaced by the *homosexual*, who colonized the waterfront in the 1960s -1980s², by tracing a terrain through:

- Anonymous sexual encounters, concentrated on the vacant piers and empty trucks parked on the waterfront bulkhead- *Sexual Colony*.
- Social activity, existing around bars, clubs, and congregations on West Street- *Social Colony*.

¹ Although the gangsters and mafia, as we shall see ran the early gay bars in the Village

² The dates and timing, I will also discuss in this section

Where it should be noted, the sexual colony is a subset of the social colony, yet is distinct within it by virtue of location and time (day vs. night).³ Both colonies create a zone of homosexual activity that Levine (1979) has shown to be characteristic of a *ghetto*, '*homo away from home*' (Kramer, 1978, p.82), but which Castells clarifies as '*liberated zones*', as these spaces are '*deliberately constructed by gay people*' (2002, p.182). This attests the ghetto as an external demarcation, while this water-world colony was intentionally created from within. On the Greenwich Village waterfront, spaces previously occupied by a distinctly different social demographic (*Joe Docks*) and function (shipping) were commandeered as a '*process that transform[ed] established cultural values and existing spatial forms*' (2002, p.182). Concurrent with, and as a process of this spatial annexation, was the transformation of the identity of the homosexual male, which pivots around the Stonewall riots of 1969. This provides a decade divide between the 1960s and 1970s, when the *swish*⁴ homosexual is replaced by the butch *Clone* (Levine, 1984). Although the spatial reference of the waterfront remains the same, the masculinity of that space alters when the 1970s homosexual zone becomes identifiable as a *Clone Zone*. This Clone however, is of course a stereotype identity and represents just a particular portion of the homosexual population that used the waterfront. I acknowledge this problem of classification, but find use in the Clone because of his connection to the decade of the 1970s. He has become a pop cultural reference for that decade and hence helps clarify the transformation of the waterfront. The clone is connected to the dereliction of the waterfront by what Henley calls '*war-zone architecture* [for it enhances] *Butch's mystique*' (1982, p. 71) and hence provides a basis for his use as the homosexual colonies main identity.

The homosexual colonization of the waterfront can be divided by this decade and identity shift. It must be noted this colonization was unique to the Greenwich Village section of the New York waterfront. There was colonization by homosexuals here for the factors of:

³ Rechy places the homosexual as existing in the city of night (1963).

⁴ The gestures created in the projection of the camp homosexual, '*to swish*' Levine (1998[1984]:22)

1. The location of the piers in relation to an already developed gay scene in Greenwich Village, and the timing of particular events in the Village which were instrumental in the colonization of the piers for sexual activity.
2. The changing condition of the piers over time allowed a new use to develop, other than their intended construction and the role of the *Reformer* in the piers condition.
3. The structural and architectural forms on the waterfront mirrored historical notions of homosexual space, and aided the emerging new identity of the gay male- The Clone.
4. This was a distinct period, and its beginning and ending were integral in a transforming waterfront.

1960s: Before Stonewall

According to Carter, '*Greenwich Village in the 1960s was both the best-known gay community in America and the place where homosexuality was most aggressively policed*' (Carter, 2004, p. 258), and due to this police presence, '*gay sex was still a mostly furtive thing in Manhattan in the mid-sixties*' (Kaiser, 1997, p. 147).

This duality of existence is traceable in the roots of the evolving gay scene in the Village. George Chauncey traces the *making* of the gay colony in Greenwich Village in his study of the years 1890- 1940, tracing the roots of the colony to the anti-establishment beliefs of village residents in a '*unique place.... resistant to conformity*' and this reputation attracted homosexuals in the hope of acceptance, even as, '*sexual non-conformists*' (1994, p. 12). The tearoom⁵ culture that flourished during prohibition also attracted the bohemian and creative set, a tradition that continued in the 1950s with the Beat Generation. Prominent Village figures which created the mystique of bohemianism included, Eugene O'Neill, James Baldwin, Norman

⁵ The tearoom culture was equivalent to the Paris café scene.

Mailer, Bernice Abbot, Allen Ginsburg, Meher Baha, Jack Kerouac and E.E. Cummings among many more, whom resided and haunted on and around Christopher Street.

A Move towards the River

After the end of prohibition in 1933, the creation of the State Liquor Authority (SLA) strictly controlled the laws surrounding the serving of alcohol, and the SLA interpreted the law to deem it an offense- punishable by closure- to have the presence of homosexuals in a bar. Transvestites were penalized by *subsection 4 of section 240.35 of the New York Penal Code*, (*antidrag laws*) which allowed for the arrest of anyone wearing '*fewer than three articles of clothing appropriate to their sex*' (Carter, 2004, p. 15-16). At this time deviant behavior implied homosexuality and hence a closable offense. This illegality to have homosexuals or deviants in an establishment, led to the mafia's involvement in gay socializing.⁶ This police interference (over 100 arrests a week through entrapment),⁷ and the criminal element began to push the homosexual to the margin of the village- the waterfront, where either organized crime or the law did not control space.⁸ However, Carter places the World's Fair of 1964⁹ in New York as a turning point in the use of the waterfront, citing, Edmond White: '*During the World's Fair, the mayor didn't want there to be a gay image to the city so he closed virtually all the bars. It felt to me, like whereas gays used to cruise in a rather furtive way on Greenwich Avenue, they were now coming down Christopher Street and moving farther and farther down toward the water*' (2004, p. 37) (fig 4.1). Carter also acknowledges sexual activity in the back of trucks parked on the waterfront around the time of the World's Fair, through 1964 and 1965. The centrality of

⁶ Like the longshoremen, homosexuals were regarded as an easy target. The mob was already involved in the extensive blackmail of homosexuals (Carter 2004, Kaiser 1997), and most notably it is believed that the mob had incriminating photographs of J. Edgar Hoover and was blackmailing him to deny the existence of organized crime in America, which he did repeatedly, particularly during the time Robert Kennedy was attorney general of the United States, whom would later go on to try to defeat the racketeering and mob involvement on the waterfront.

⁷ Involving police officers posing as homosexuals to lure men into activity, for which they were then arrested. (Weinberg and Williams 1975: 49) and (Carter 2004)

⁸ Remembering the mob had left the waterfront, once shipping had departed

⁹ The trucks on the waterfront may have been used earlier than 1960 for sex, (but in the 60s of which Carter is speaking, a trend developed of homosexual westward migration)

Christopher Street and the waterfront as a place of sexual activity is well established, particularly the use of the trucks, by 1966-68, as noted by Weinberg and Williams in their study *Male Homosexuals: Their Problems and Adaptations* (1975):¹⁰

'The fulcrum of homosexual life in the Village is Christopher Street... At the western end of the street are the "docks" or "trucks" at the waterfront. The trucks parked here are a locale for much homosexual activity. Left unattended at night, they are often used as convenient places in which to engage in sex... Often particular trucks become the scenes of orgies that continue for hours with a stream of new participants' (1975, p.63).



Fig 4.1: Greenwich Village and waterfront in the 1960s, noting Greenwich Avenue, Christopher Street and The location of the trucks at the foot of Christopher Street adjacent to Pier 40.

¹⁰ Noting that their field research was carried out in 1966-68, and again briefly in 1970.

Carter (2004) interviewed *Jerry Hoose*, who remarked on sexual activity in the back of trucks (in the 1960s), which after deliveries during the day would be left empty and unlocked on the dock overnight. The lack of contents negated the need to lock the trucks, but also their parked location, reversed up to the bulkhead edge provided protection. Another witness who Carter interviews, *Marle Becker* explains the use of the trucks for sex as a result of an inability to rent hotel rooms, the prevalence of plain clothes police officers carrying out entrapment arrests and the illegality to congregate in bars- '*so it was safer to be with two hundred people in the back of a truck*' (2004, p. 37). The waterfront had been colonized and was now identifiable as a homosexual zone. A contemporaneous cultural depiction of this colony can be found in *The Detective* (Douglas dir. 1968) starring Frank Sinatra, who seeks out a homosexual murderer amongst the activity in the trucks;¹¹ this places the trucks as central to the transformation of the waterfront from industry to recreation and highlights the shifting occupancy and activity on the waterfront as understood by the general population.



Fig 4.2: The Trucks on the bulkhead at the foot of Christopher Street, adjacent to Pier 40 (left of image); the shadow and enclosure caused by the elevated Miller Highway is re-creating the night.

¹¹ Although it is a bizarre non-sexual depiction of pastel cashmere glad homosexuals sitting inside a particularly clean truck.

The Waterfront Condition (pre-Stonewall)

When this homosexual colony begins its distinct¹² occupation of the waterfront in the 1960s, the piers as places of industry are in their twilight years and vacancy (lack of tenants) was becoming a mainstay condition. There are however, no references to sex *in* or *on* the actual piers at this time, other than sex *by* the piers (in the trucks). This was primarily due to the city's continued commercial interest in the waterfront as a viable infrastructure¹³ and the continued jurisdiction of the International Longshoremen's Association over the piers. The ILA provided *watchmen* to guard the piers, preventing trespassers from frequenting the pier sheds.

The condition of the piers was as follows:

- **Pier 40** was vacant by the mid 1960s after the departure of the Holland America Line and remained empty through the end of the decade.
- **Pier 42-** the passenger Nassau Line was on a month-to-month lease before being replaced in the mid 1960s by break bulk cargo haulage, which itself ends due to continued strike action in 1968- there is no shed on this pier by this time. It is on this pier's bulkhead that the majority of trucks used for sex are parked.
- **Pier 45** is used by the Norwegian American Line during the 1960s and docks a new ship the *Stavangerfjord* there in 1965. By the end of the decade it is vacant, most likely as a result of the tugboat strike of 1967.
- **Pier 46** is vacant throughout the decade and begins to structurally deteriorate.
- **Pier 48** is under a 10-year lease to the Erie Railroad until 1966. An assortment of US Navy vessels also dock at this pier during the decade, but it is vacant by 1969.
- **Pier 49** is an NYPD car-impound lot by 1966, continuing as such for several years.

¹² Compared to its earlier marginalized presence, as covert sex acts amongst sailors (Chauncey, 1995).

¹³ As demonstrated by the city's Ebasco Plan of 1962.

- **Pier 50** was leased by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. The lease had been month-to-month since the 1950s. The pier is last used in the mid 1960s (New York Times, 1973).
- **Pier 51** was a Cunard cargo pier up until 1966 when strike action ended its run.
- **Pier 52** was derelict and vacant, hidden behind the Sanitation Department's salt storage and incinerator on Gansevoort Peninsula. A sliver of its frontage was used as a makeshift lido by the local community during the late 1950s and 60s.
- **Pier 53** remained as a berth for the New York City fireboat (fig 4.3)

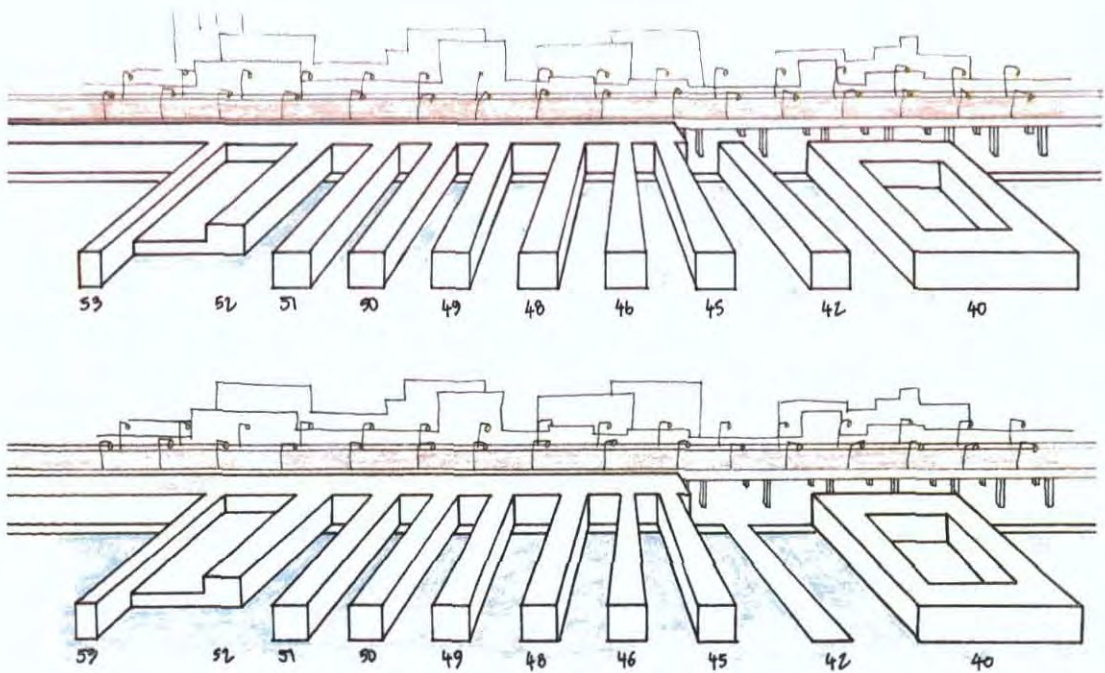


Fig. 4.3: Piers in 1962 (top) and in 1970 (below): pier 42 has become a naked deck, but the waterfront remains intact.

The activity of the colony in the 1960s is therefore concentrated on the other elements that make up the waterfront- West Street and in the trucks parked on the piers bulkhead. On West Street the activity is concentrated in the homosexual bars as catalogued by Weinberg and Williams (1975) in 1966-68; the most notorious being *Kellers*,¹⁴ (across the street from the largest concentration of parked trucks) which was a seaman's bar by day and a bar catering to homosexuals at night and *Faller's Bar* at Christopher and West Street, listed as having an 'S&M *Leather crowd*' in the 1968 winter issue of N.Y.C.G.S.G.¹⁵

A Word of Warning

The waterfront is referred to in the 1969 summer issue of N.Y.C.G.S.G. with a note of caution regarding the police, which implies the waterfront was not necessarily the escape from police harassment as it appeared:

'Also, for those looking for rough trade (and there's plenty of it here, so be careful), a well-known cruising area is to be found at THE DOCKS at the end of Christopher Street (west side). The cruising is best where the trucks park. This well-known cruising area is referred to here only because it is so well-known, but at the present time, I want to warn you to stay away from it. Reports have come in that the new police policy is to discourage congregations too near the waterfront docks due to real crimes, and there have been a number of recent arrests of gay kids¹⁶ in this area' (Rack, 1969, p.6)- emphasis added to highlight the common knowledge of waterfront as place for rough natured sexual activity.

¹⁴ Kellers Bar at 384 West Street was part of Kellers maritime hotel, as mentioned in the abjection of Joe Docks- it is difficult to date when it became known as a homosexual establishment, however its connection with sailors may have tempered its reputation long before the 1960s.

¹⁵ New York City Gay Scene Guide, produced by the Matachine Society.

¹⁶ These kids, are The colony of Legendary Children, as discussed as a separate colony in later sections.

Change is in the Air

There was a change to the use of entrapment from 1966, when Mayor Lindsay outlawed the practice, but it would take several more years and legal challenges to overturn positions of the SLA; however, following demonstrations by the Mattachine Society of New York (MSNY),¹⁷ there was the beginnings of change in ownership and control of gay bars and clubs, from the mafia to legitimate business. Again the 1969¹⁸ summer issue of N.Y.C.G.S.G provides insight into the situation in New York:

'There is [] no longer any police entrapment in these bars by vice-squadders dressed in tennis shoes and tight pants as there was in the city a relatively few years ago. Also, since the famous MSNY "sip-in" in the Spring of 1966, there is also no police harassment of gay bars in the city' (Rack, 1969, p.6).

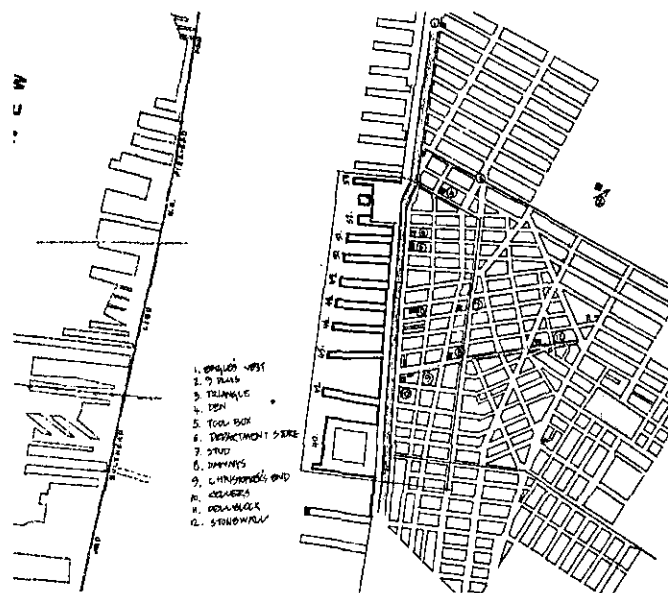


Fig 4.4: Gay Bars on the Waterfront in 1969; the elevated Miller Highway is indicated in Blue; Christopher Street in Pink; Washington Square Park is Green

¹⁷ An American homophile association, which began in 1955.

¹⁸ In 1968 Judge Kenneth Keating ruled, that even close dancing between homosexuals was legal.

Despite the positive outlook of the MSNY in early 1969, gay men in New York were still under police scrutiny and the SLA was still closing bars that catered to homosexuals under the *antidrag* laws.¹⁹ On the night of Judy Garland's funeral,²⁰ June 27, 1969, the clientele of the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street gathered to mourn their collective loss. The bar was a members-only club²¹ operated by the mafia and catering to homosexuals. It was subject to a police raid on that night. What made this raid exceptional was this time the gay patrons and drag queens decided that compliance with the police and SLA was no longer an option, and a stand off and riot ensued, both in the bar and on the streets lasting three days; *"The cop hit me, and I hit him back," DeLarverie explained* and *'The police were pelted with pennies, dimes and insults, as shouts of "Pigs," "Faggot cops," and "This is your payoff!" filled the night'* (Kaiser 1997, p. 198).²² This was the *pin drop heard around the world* and the event marked the beginning of the gay liberation movement and a more robust homosexual stance on spatial reclamation after a decade on the streets being told, *'move on faggots, move on'* (Carter 2004: 17).

By 1969 and in the years leading up to the Stonewall Riot there is a shift towards homosexual domination on the waterfront, which means the flip in the spatial progression of the waterfront occurred prior to the Stonewall revolt. This is a contrast to the depiction of the gay sexual revolution on the waterfront as being a post-stonewall phenomenon.²³ This new spatial reality, what Betsky (1997) calls *queer space*, existed as a waterfront condition by the close of the 1960s. The waterfront and the perception of it, was therefore altered by the homosexual colonization.

¹⁹ Or when the mafia had not provided pay-offs to the SLA.

²⁰ Kaiser (1997) explains Garland's homosexual appeal through her motto *'all my life I've done everything to excess'* (192); also its possible through the *Wizard of Oz* (1939) which placed New York as the Emerald City and a reminder to new city arrivals *'you're not in Kansas anymore'*, that things were different in the 'big-city'. Her death also indicated the *end of an era*.

²¹ Patrons had to 'sign-in' and pay membership fees, even if visiting for one night.

²² For a comprehensive study on the Stonewall Riot see Kaiser (1997), Carter (2004) and Weinberg and Williams (1975).

²³ Kramer refers to the 1970s as approximating a homosexual Roman Empire and Levott's *'Sex in the 70s'* (2005) documentary, relies on a post-stonewall version of sexual freedom on the waterfront.

1970s: Post Stonewall

The Clone Zone

As demonstrated above, the waterfront had begun its development towards a period of homosexual colonization prior to the Stonewall revolt, and the waterfront was becoming central to the gay experience of Greenwich Village. In the 1970s the domination of the waterfront by gay men expanded out on to the piers themselves, as vacancy and demolition of piers accelerated in this decade. Allen Ginsburg commenting after the Stonewall riot in 1969, said '*they've lost that wounded look that fags had ten years ago*' (as cited in Carter, 2004, p. 199), and that phrasing marked the coming decade of the 70s as the '*heroic age*' of homosexuality (Carter 2004). Kramer (1978) referred too the 1970s as being akin to the decadent days of the late Roman Empire.

The Mattachine Society sprang into further action upon the riots and other groups, notably the *Gay Activists Alliance* (GAA) and the *Gay Liberation Front* (GLF) began and pushed a progressive agenda; beginning with marches, demonstrations, bar embargos and GLF run discos- the first that were not exclusively mafia run. In 1973, the *American Psychiatric Association* changed its long held position on homosexuality, by no longer referring to it as a mental disorder. As important as these actions and changes were to the gay cause, they, unlike in the 60s did not have as much of noticeable effect on the waterfront in the 1970s. As repression, promoted a move westwards towards the river in the 1960s, the colony of bars and places of sexual activity in the 1970s merely became more established, as the longshoremen's union and City withdrew their interest in the piers, and voids (available for colonization) opened on the waterfront.

The most important development on the waterfront homosexual colony was in 1973, after the collapse and close of the elevated Miller Highway and the subsequent *Westway* plan in

1974. *Westway* was a plan to replace the highway with a subterranean roadway built under landfill, in the location of the piers- effectively negating the finger piers on the lower Manhattan and Greenwich Village waterfront. Following the plan, there was a government *dis*-investment in the upkeep and maintenance of the piers and their sheds- given that they were to be demolished in the *Westway* plan. The planning for *Westway* would last until 1985, which left the waterfront in limbo for 11 years, when essentially nothing happened. The pier abandonment,²⁴ which was *absolute*,²⁵ delivered immediate large cavernous spaces (fig 4.5) to the already established waterfront homosexual colony and quickly they became a place of sexual conquest and adventure; combined with the West Street bars, the trucks and the street cruising, the waterfront was a recognizable gay colony in the 1970s (fig 4.6). The pier sheds and trucks (particularly at night) came to represent a *sexual colony*. The bars, street and open deck piers²⁶ used for sunbathing were a *social colony*.



Fig 4.5: The *sexual colony*, inside the pier 46's abandoned pier shed in the 1970s.

Fig 4.6: a scene of the *social colony* sunbathing on the end of Pier 51.

²⁴ Abandonment was common on in New York City in the 1970s, particularly following the fiscal crisis of 1975; the Lower East Side, The Bronx and neighbourhoods in Brooklyn, as owners found it cheaper to abandon buildings to avoid tax and insurance, (in the case of the South Bronx fires were set on buildings to claim back their insurance value, as that value exceeded the real value of the properties).

²⁵ The city, unions, lease holders quite literally walked away from the pier buildings and threw in the keys- there was no future on the waterfront.

²⁶ Piers that had no sheds, or the sheds had collapsed and were removed (naked piers).

The Reformer: A Look At Westway

Westway was designed as a *below grade*²⁷ solution to the collapsed *Elevated Miller Highway*, but *the Reformer* had been interested in the waterfront and the Miller Highway before then, as the shipping industry dissipated from the Village and the Highway was in need of general upkeep repairs and expansion. The first below grade plan for the waterfront was in 1969-70 by the city's *Housing and Development Administration* (HDA); a scheme that placed the highway under a built up platform above landfill on the present location of the piers- an expensive proposition. To fund this new highway and expansion on the waterfront, the city applied to the federal government for designation of Route 9A to a federal interstate highway. This made the plan eligible for federal funding. Designation was granted in 1971. That year, the *Urban Development Corporation*²⁸ (UDC) took over the project and released it as the *Wateredge Development* as the most effective plan to push forward on the waterfront.



Fig 4.7: The Elevated Miller Highway collapse, December 15, 1973.

However, before *Wateredge* progressed any great deal events on the Miller Highway overtook it: On December 15th 1973 a truck (delivering asphalt for the highway's repair) and a

²⁷ Below street level.

²⁸ Also known as The Empire State Development Corporation, was founded in 1968; it is a public body of the State of New York, and is responsible for building large state projects, through the issue of tax-exempt bonds, that provide funding. They have the power of eminent domain and operate outside Legislature approval.

car plunged through the deck of the highway closing it south of 18th street (New York Times, 1973) (fig 4.7). The traffic switched to the roadway under the highway (at grade) and the remaining elevated sections were effectively abandoned. West Street (under the vacant highway) became increasingly congested because of this additional diverted traffic. Repair and replacement were considered, but in 1974 the UDC unveiled a less ambitious²⁹ version of the *Wateredge* plan; consisting of a fully enclosed tunnel in new landfill. The new plan- *Westway*- a federally funded project to build six lanes of traffic at the outer pier line in two tunnels and a landfill of 181 acres incorporated a park, residential and commercial development above (fig 4.9); with a development understanding that *'the beauty of dropping it in the drink was that this way you got a broad new area, and people could walk right to the water without being cut off from the highway. There was lots of parkland acreage'* (Whitaker, cited in Lopate, 2004, p. 84).

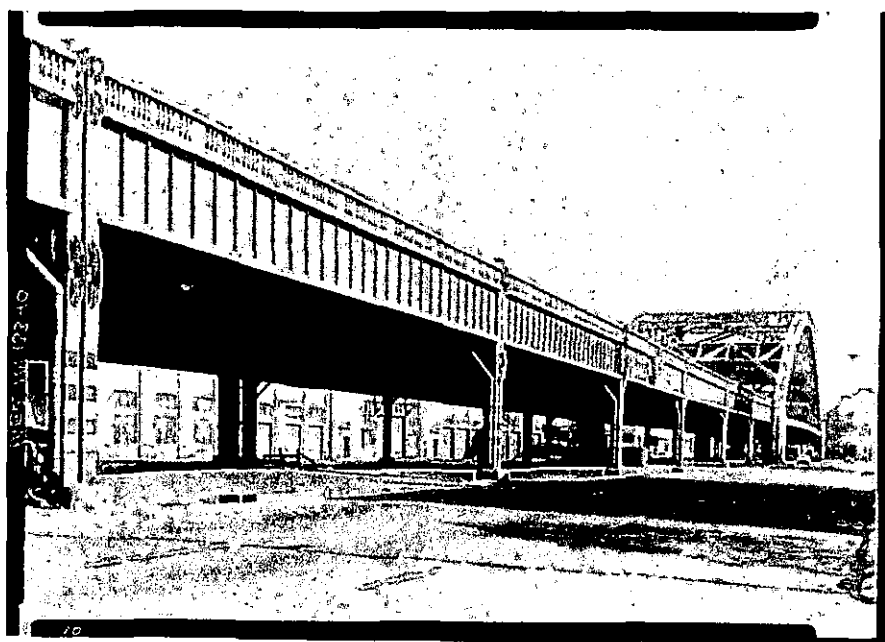


Fig 4.8: The Elevated Miller Highway is left standing and abandoned in the 1970s, seen here at approximately Canal Street. It covers the street in a 'lid' protecting it from the elements.

²⁹ In terms of landfill acreage.

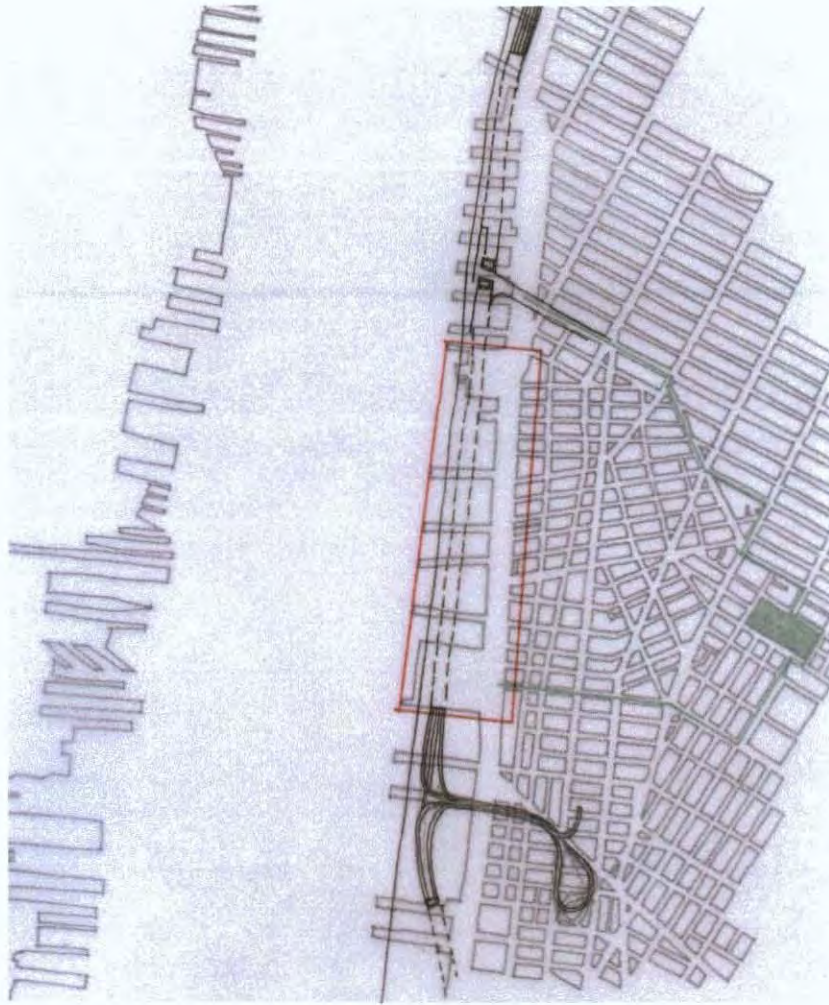


Fig 4.9: The *Westway* Plan; highlighted in red are the piers of the Village that were to be destroyed and the extent of landfill in the plan; the dotted line indicates the location of the tunnels.

A Battle Against the Reformer Begins

There was an almost immediate public opposition to *Westway* (Lopate, 2004), even though political, union and corporate favor for it was unanimous. Opposition centered on *clean-air*- as part of the *anti-highway* movement and on the development of the landfill being inappropriate in scale to Greenwich Village. The roots of these efforts were set in earlier community action against the cross Manhattan expressways, the burgeoning environmental movement and the preservation efforts against uricide in the 1960s. These became law in New York in 1965 through the *Landmark's Preservation Law*, later a federal directive with the

passing of the *National Historic Preservation Act* in 1966, which promoted urban rehabilitation of important centers and supported smaller scale development (Buttenweiser, 1999).

There was a feeling in New York in 1963, the summer that Pennsylvania Station's demolition began, that New York was losing something important in the destruction of such an architectural landmark, and that the city had just bowed to corporate and financial pressures to sell itself off for the benefit of the few at the expense of the urban experience, creating an '*impoverished society*' (Huxtable, 1963). The failure of the planning commission and City agencies to prevent the demolition of the station generated a suspicion of other plans for the city by those with urban authority. Concurrent with this was Robert Moses'³⁰ plans for a *Lower Manhattan Expressway*, that had been proposed in the mid 1940s after World War II, but was a priority again by the early 60s- the project involved building a highway through the neighborhoods between the Williamsburg Bridge on the East side and the Holland Tunnel on the West side of Manhattan Island, through SoHo and Greenwich Village along Broome Street. However, Moses' plan was defeated by a consorted community effort by artists in SoHo and residents in the Village, led by the social and urban activist, Jane Jacobs. Jacobs set the tone of the decade with her book '*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*' (1961). She railed against the threats to the urban core caused by the promotion of the suburbs and the car by Robert Moses. Coupled with the observation of the death of Penn Station, the dismantling of the classical facades on the waterfront, the trans-Manhattan expressway projects and the threats to the Villard Mansions in midtown, there was recognition in city of the damage another major city planned infrastructural project posed to the city. This led many city residents to fight against *Westway* in a bid to save their city from more governmental intervention. The anti-*Westway* movement's issue was not just the saving of the river or the piers but framed in the

³⁰ Although when I began this research I was under the impression that Moses would play an important role on the Village waterfront, as he had else where in the city, it was in this indirect way only that his presence was felt.

larger context of saving New York City, as Jacobs notes, '*expressways [] eviscerate great cities. This is not the rebuilding of Cities. This is the sacking of Cities*' (1961, p. 4).

This community activism carried over into *Westway* and the opponents of the previous expressway scheme, were able to regroup to take-on this new federally funded highway. A coalition against the *Westway* highway developed upon its announcement, progressively getting more active by 1980; the groups involved were, *The Clean Air Campaign*, *Action for Rational Transit* and *The Sierra Club*; these groups together were actually opposed to the building of the roadway, not that it was landfill or infringing on the river. The opponents were against the project because it was in their eyes, increasing car use at the expense of the subway system, to which they wanted the federal funds set aside for the project re-directed to public transport. They were a pro-public transport anti-car movement, framing their argument in terms of air quality (remembering they had spent the 1960s battling Moses on the same issues). Even though Moses was not involved in the *Westway* project,³¹ it still represented the coalition he created of-

'the giant automobile manufacturers out of Detroit, the giant aluminium combines, the steel producers, the rubber producers, fifty oil companies, trucking firms in the hundreds, highway contractors in the thousands, consulting engineers, labor union leaders, auto dealers, tire dealers, petroleum dealers, rank upon rank of state highway department officials, Bureau of Public Roads bureaucrats, congressmen, senators- all the selfish interests whom author Helen Leavitt was to label "The Highwaymen."' (Caro, 1975, p. 926)

Therefore, the battle against *Westway* was itself a battle against the *Reformer* and all that the vested-interest *establishment* represented.

³¹ He was actually vocally against it (Lopate 2004), likely due to his ousting from control of infrastructure in New York in 1968, by the Rockefellers.

In an attempt to appease this opposition *Venturi, Rausch and Scott Brown Architects* were hired in 1978 to design the new park, that was to be built above the highway tunnels and landfill. It was to help promote the recreational and public advantages of such a scheme. The opening of the esplanade on the landfill of Battery Park City in 1983, was also a demonstration of how such a park would look and function. This however did not quell the opposition.

The opposition's argument later turned to the proposed building development of the scheme, which was only a concern after the economic recovery in the 1980s when the price of property in Greenwich Village rose dramatically, causing protectionism by the local community and an opposition to new development. Through continuous legal action on both sides of the battle, the issue came to a close in 1985 after 11 years, when the courts revoked the *Army Corp of Engineers* landfill permits, on the grounds that the project would damage the spawning grounds of the striped bass.³²

The Greenwich Village waterfront, in this period of *Westway* between 1974 and 1985, was left in a state of limbo, with no investment made in the maintenance of the piers, as it was intended they would be demolished once construction began on *Westway*. This left a void in the occupancy of the waterfront, and it was available for colonization. The New York City fiscal crisis of 1975 (when the city almost defaulted on its loan obligations) led to a further withdrawal by the City from the waterfront- there were no municipal funds available for its upkeep. The disinvestment and lack of city interest led to the inevitable collapse and destruction of the piers, and by 1985 when the landfill proposal was laid to rest, there were no pier sheds remaining in the Village (which also frames the period of the Clone Colony).

³² It was found by accident that the striped bass spawned amongst the pilings of the West side piers, these fish (another colony!) were regarded as an important ecological diversity and economically important to the fishing industry off the New England shore, where the bass eventually swam after spawning in New York.

The Waterfront Condition

In the 1970s the condition and physical structure of the waterfront deteriorated as shipping was almost completely abandoned on the West side, and as explained above, further affected by the absolute abandonment of the piers due to *Westway*. The use of the piers as a sexual and social colony can be traced through vacancy and eventual collapse of the piers.

The condition of the piers was as follows:

- **Pier 40** is taken over by The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) in 1971 and rented out as a parking lot for the next several decades, it is therefore off-limits to the colony, and remains under municipal control.
- **Pier 42** is an open deck pier and the *John W. Brown*- a school ship for training merchant marines, moors there. The pier is used for sun bathing and socializing during the day by the homosexual colony. It is on this pier's bulkhead that the majority of trucks used for sex are parked.
- **Pier 45** is empty and part of a city plan in 1970 to convert it for 6 months into a cultural destination with an art gallery and coffee shops, with a park connecting it on its bulkhead to pier 42 (Gent, 1970), however protests and pickets by the ILA prevent the plan going ahead and the festival is transferred to central park. Pier 45 is then left derelict and empty. It is used as a place for homosexual encounters.³³
- **Pier 46** is vacant, derelict and collapses slowly into the river during the 1970s before burning down in 1980. Its collapsing shed is used by homosexuals to engage in sex.
- **Pier 48** was derelict in a shadowy form of grandeur by 1975; it was used for homosexual sexual activity. It burns out in 1976 and again in 1977. It is left in 1978 as a wrenching bundle of steel sunken into the river (fig 4.12).

³³ In the 1978 film *The Eyes of Laura Mars*, pier 45 is used as a set for a photographic studio.

- **Pier 49-** its shed has burned down and its ruins cleared (by the Army Corp of Engineers) by 1975, leaving an open pier deck. It was used for recreation by day.
- **Pier 50** burns out in 1973, but remains as a shifting twisted form until the Army Corp of Engineers removed it to prevent its debris from floating in the river and interfering with merchant shipping in 1977.
- **Pier 51** was damaged by the 1973 fire on pier 50, but manages to remain standing until the early 1980s. Its vast interior is used for sex.
- **Pier 52** in its vacant state became notorious for S&M sexual activity (Ouroussoff, 2007). It is unknown however whether this activity continued after 1975, when in that year Gordon Matta-Clark created *Day's End (Pier 52)* by cutting a large eye-shaped opening in the end wall of the pier shed (figs 4.14, 4.15). By 1982 the shed is completely gone- there is a new salt storage shed in its place- and the designation of pier 52 transfers to another projecting shed west of the Gansevoort Peninsula. There is no evidence to suggest the makeshift lido (mentioned in The New York Times in 1959) is still in use during the 1970s, as most daytime recreation has shifted to pier 49.
- **Pier 53** remains as a berth for the New York City fireboat and hence under municipal control. (figs 4.15).



Fig 4.10: Piers looking North in 1977; from bottom- pier 46, skeleton of pier 48, naked deck of pier 49, pier 50 is completely gone, pier 51 is in a curvilinear collapse, and the chimneys of the Sanitation Department's incinerator on Gansevoort Peninsula are visible to the center rear.

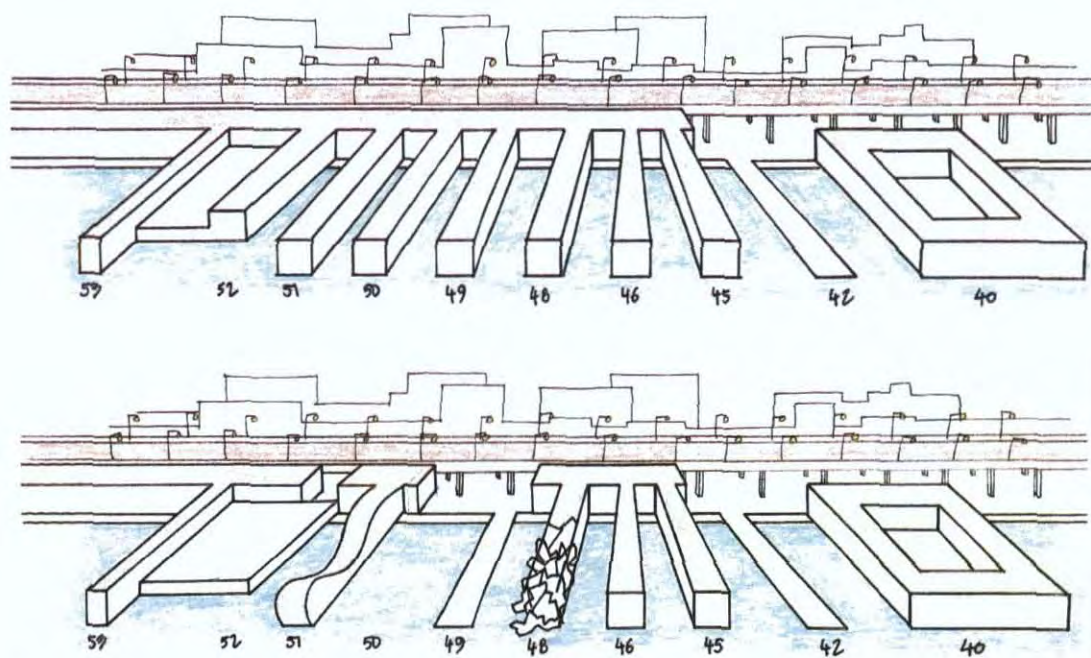


Fig: 4.11: The piers in 1970 (above); in 1977 (bottom), in this decade there is the most dramatic physical change to the piers; the Shed on pier 52 collapses; pier 51 is a curvilinear ruin; pier 50 is gone; pier 49 is an open deck; pier 48 is a contorted mess of steel ruin; pier 46 and 45, abandoned ruins, but still standing; pier 42 open deck; pier 40 now a car park.



Fig 4.12: Looking East towards the City from the Hudson River; Pier 48 is a wrenching mess of steel in 1978; the large building to the left is Westbeth Apartments, formerly Bell Labs; the abandoned elevated Miller Highway cut across the waterfront; the Empire State Building surveys the whole scene from a distance.



Fig 4.13: Looking South from Pier 51 in 1975; the carcass of Pier 48 is visible and behind that is Pier 46 and rising behind is Pier 45; the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center survey the whole waterfront, from their location further South on West Street.

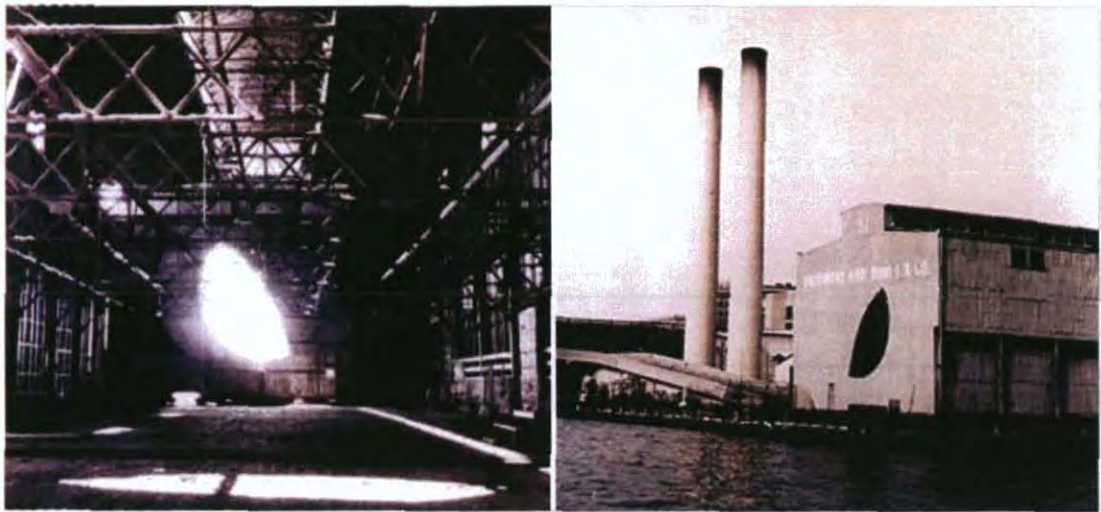


Fig 4.14: Days End (Pier 52) 1975; Gordon Matta-Clark cuts an eye-shaped swath out of Pier 52; light enters- the enclosed space has been exposed; the Sanitation Department's incinerator chimneys are to the left of the pier shed.

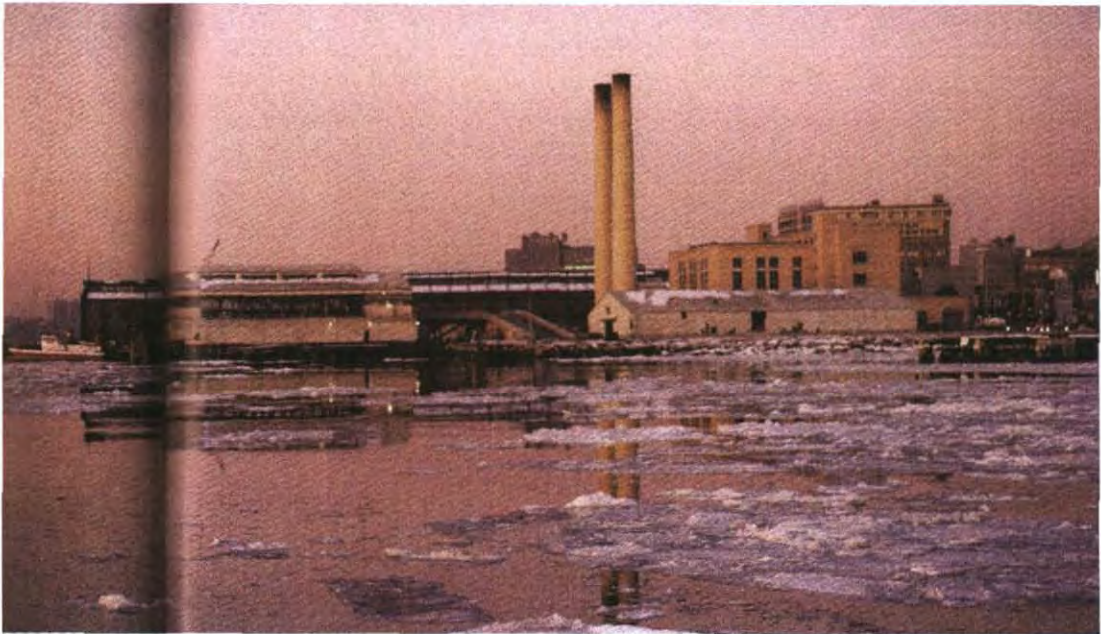


Fig 4.15: 1982 looking North to the Gansevoort Peninsula; Pier 52 is gone, replaced approximately by a new Department of Sanitation salt storage shed; the derelict pier to the left and end of the Peninsula, is from now called pier 52; the FDNY fireboat is visible to the left at Pier 53.

The collapsing piers were dealt with by the *New York Harbor Collection and Removal of Drift: Navigation Project* of 1974, which was run by the *Army Corp of Engineers*, whom contracted out the work of removing piers in the harbor once they posed a threat, or potential threat to navigation in the port. Once a pier shed had begun to collapse and debris was falling into the river, the whole shed was systematically removed to prevent further debris from

floating around the harbor. There was also an impact on the pier conditions from the federal *Clean Water Act* of 1972, which along with legal actions taken by *Hudson Riverkeeper*, changed pollution levels in the river. This led inadvertently to the re-emergence of the *shipworm*.³⁴ The shipworm- a common problem in the early shipping industry, when this *wood borer* would reduce any under water wood (piers or ships) to pulp, was suppressed by the harbor pollution, only to re-emerge to attack (colonize) the piers once the water became less polluted from the early 1970s.³⁵ The piers were attacked by fire, vandalism and *freeze-thaw action*³⁶ from above and from the shipworm from below, leading to an inevitable destruction.

Masculinity And The Zone Of Abjection

In discussing the concept of a zone of abjection during this period, it becomes apparent that the perspective of the observer is critical to understanding these contexts on the waterfront. I will initially describe it from an internal position, where the colony is creating a utopian world. I will also note the inverse of this utopia, in the dangers of the waterfront and the ambivalence to abjection amongst the colony. I then discuss it from the exterior; when this utopia is viewed from outside the colony causes abjection and the waterfront continues to read as a zone of this abjection.³⁷

The Body

The post-Stonewall colony, not only represented a waterfront condition, but a masculine identity that was a break from conventional representations of the homosexual as less than manly. The new 1970s homosexual used the archetypes of masculinity to foster the

³⁴ *Teredo navalis*.

³⁵ For additional information on pollution see Lopate 2004

³⁶ Freeze-thaw action is the most common environmental damage to built structures in New York; it involves a process of infiltration of water into crevices and cracks in either stone, concrete or wood, the water freezes- expands, leading to a largening of the crack from which the process continues until if untreated, there is structural failure.

³⁷ This is a different appreciation of the zone of abjection than the one that Joe Docks existed in, as Joe Docks under the control of the gangsters was aware of his own subjugation and resultant abjection.

creation of the *Clone* as an ideal of masculinity, and a new thoroughly manly homosexual. The most thorough explanation of the clone is provided by Levine:

'Clones filled gay neighborhoods across America, marking such areas with a certain sameness', 'Clones symbolize modern homosexuality... modeled themselves upon traditional masculinity and the self-fulfillment ethic (Yankelvitch 1981). Aping blue-collar workers, they butched it up and acted like macho men. Accepting me-generation values, they searched for self-fulfillment in anonymous sex, recreational drugs, and hard partying', turning into 'doped-up, sexed-out, Marlboro men.' The Clone was the 'manliest of men' who 'had a gym-defined body... rippling with bulging muscles... wore blue-collar garb' and in the 1970s and early 80s his 'life style became culturally dominant' in gay neighborhoods (1984, p. 7-8).

On the waterfront the clone finds a center for his lifestyle, in the sexual activity of the piers and a concentration of bars on West Street in the 1970s; *Kellers* at Barrow Street; *Christopher's End* at Christopher Street; *Cellblock* at West Eleventh St.; *Exile* at West Twelfth St.; *Tool Box* at Jane Street; *Ramrod* in the old Sea Shell Tavern at 394 West Street. A street culture existed between these bars and under the disused elevated Miller highway, where the clone is quite visible (figs 4.16, 4.17).

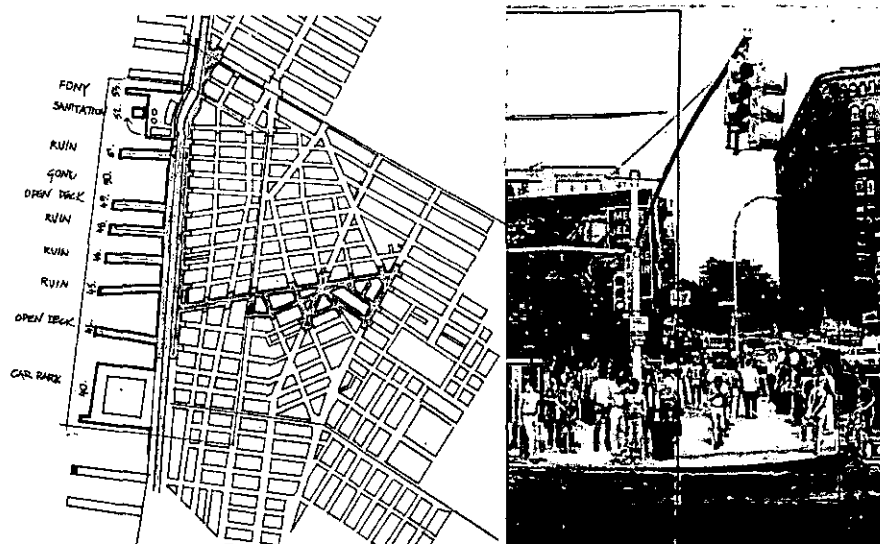


Fig 5.2.16: The Clone Zone (zone of abjection) in the Village and on the Waterfront in the late 1970s; note Meat Packing district (indicated in yellow), there were 'rough trade' bars in this area, and as the waterfront as a zone diminished in the early 1980s, the colony headed north to here and up into Chelsea.

Fig 5.2.17: The Corner of West Street and Christopher Street in 1981, outside the bar Badlands

As part of the clone image was an affinity with the working-male of the sea faring past. It was appropriate therefore, that when he took the image and dress codes of the longshoreman and the sailor, he would also locationally adopt them as well. This was aptly depicted by the *Village People's* YMCA (fig 4.20) music video, filmed on pier 49 in 1978, with each member cast as a stereotype version of the butch male- the clone on the waterfront. The creation of the male body towards a particular image- an ideal of masculine musculature- together with an idolization of the perfected male form, for example in the drawings of *Tom of Finland*³⁸ (fig 4.18) led to the fetishizing of the overtly-masculine male, '*construction worker arms*', '*muscle-build.... with hyperbolic results to parade on Christopher Street*' (Kramer, 1978, p. 25).

³⁸ Was the publishing name of Touko Laaksonen, born Finland 1920; first publishing his drawings in 1956, but becoming prominent in the 1970s.



Figs 4.18, 4.19, 4.20: The Clone as envisioned by Tom of Finland; The Real Life Clone at Pier 42;
The Parody in The Village People, the music video for YMCA filmed on Pier 49, pier 51 is in the background.

This modern male on the waterfront, which was exaggerating elements of the blue-collar earlier colony, can be seen in the comparison of the gay fantasy version and the actual physical stature of gay men on the piers (fig 4.19). In keeping with the metamorphosis that Kristeva asserts occurs on the marginal edge, Levine notes that this hyper-masculinity was '*a form of drag*' (1984, p. 63) and thus blurred identity. It is easy assume this body image was the norm for gay men in the 1970s, at least from reading the fiction of that period from The Violet Quill group of writers.³⁹ It was of course not the norm, but has come to symbolize the decade of the 1970s before the 1980s onslaught of the Aids epidemic. Aids physically decimated the bodies (muscular atrophy) of New York's homosexual population and hence the glorification of the body prior to the advent of disease.

The Utopian Waterfront?

The spatiality of the clone colony was expressed in the physical detritus of the rotting piers. They were a butch manifestation of a spatial environment in totem without the introduction of stylistic elements. They existed in their natural state, former working-male

³⁹ This group of writers gathered together in the early 1980s, in order to gain recognition for their writings. Their writing concentrated on their own experiences of gay life in post-stonewall New York, and as a result there is a tendency to romanticize their experiences and beautify the city with populations beautiful male bodies. The members were Edmund White, Andrew Holleran, Robert Ferro, Felice Picano, George Whitmore, Michael Grumley, and Christopher Cox.

environments, now providing a fetishistic backdrop to the colony.⁴⁰ Most important for the homosexual colony was the waterfront as *ruin*. As it provided a theatrical representation of the fleeting nature of anonymous sex- in a void of darkness where systems and order collapse in the pursuit of pleasure. The ruin connects with the romantic past of both the longshoreman's butch demeanor and provides danger and mystique. Campkin notes the following about the appeal of sex in derelict zones: '*although this is a threatening environment, the erotic appeal... is linked to its derelict state and vandalized appearance*' (2009, p. 214). The ruin connects reality with myth, as Betsky (1997) outlines through the three scenes of classical theater, *tragedy*, *comedy* and thirdly *myth*. The third scene *myth*, is a mixture of the man-made and the natural, ruins, trees, the real and the imagined; it is '*queer space*' (1997, p. 26). The piers provided this space for the myths of the perfect lover, immortality, endless pleasure and freedom from the strictures of society, all served up as an encapsulation of this colony by the gay writers of the 1970s- Felice Picano, *The Lure* (1979); Andrew Holleran, *The Dancer from the Dance* (1978); Tennessee Williams, *Moise and the World of Reason* (1975). Holleran even proposed '*when the shoreline is made pretty by city planners, - then we'll build an island in New York Harbor composed entirely of rotting piers*' (cited in Lopate, 2004, p. 76). The ruin and ruined piers held an ephemeral allure, as if knowing their imminent collapse into the Hudson River represented the nature of life itself. The ruin in Henley's, *The Butch Manual: The Current Drag and How To Do It* (1982),⁴¹ is a '*butch locale*' and the ideal of the clone's spatial existence: '*Dresden after the fire storms. War-zone architecture*'⁴² certainly enhances the ghetto, not to mention *Butch's mystique*' (1982, p. 71). As the same piers are used by these 1970s writers, an understanding of common experience and shared emotion is applied to the waterfront, and the

⁴⁰ Levine notes how this industrial environment was artificially constructed in the gay bars in the 1970s because '*high-tech accessories provided the perfect vehicle for expressing gay masculinity and butchness. Industrial artifacts suggested blue-collar workers. In addition, the stream-lined utilitarianism of these artifacts conveyed such macho traits as practicality and unembellishment*' (1984, p. 65).

⁴¹ This satirical guide to the clone scene essentially is a mocking version of what Levine would write in his 1984 thesis.

⁴² Betsky (1995) connects Lebbeus Woods, *Architecture and War* (1992), with the creation of sexual space.

myth of a sexual nirvana there coalesced. The ephemeral and romantic quality of the piers is evoked in *Faggots* (1978)-the location is identifiable as the burnt-out pier 48 (fig 4.21):



Fig 4.21: Pier 48 in 1975, The Erie and Lackawana Terminal 'fire-ravaged skeleton of former grandeurs.'

'In the darkness of the Erie and Lackawana terminal... Ah, home away from home, ah black hole of Calcutta, ah windswept, storm toss'd, fire-ravaged skeleton of former grandeurs! That you are still standing!, with your three stories gutted yet still here. Holes in you for entrance, holes within your stockings, fetid waters underneath, your bottom twisted and rippling like wooden waves, You Are a Woman! Our Ellie, Barbra, Kate, Bette, Diana, Marlene, Tallulah, Judy! Survivor, standing after all these ravages upon your face and body, from users and abusers of your finery, but still submitting, still bearing outrage, how many

pints, quarts, gallons of semen spilled into your pock-marked skin? . . . now, now . . . into your tent creep this warm night, creep any night, crawling in and into this biggest womb and void of spacious blackness, total darkness, tread carefully, don't trip, holes are many, beams are loose, floor-boards missing, and oh the river is wide, and cold, and schmutzig, and beneath me, oi, also this building has no back, this lady wears a strapless, feel movement around me, who knows how many?, two thousand?, two hundred?, two?, me and my murderer?, me and my next beloved?, what a fantasy trip, I don't have to see you and you don't have to see me, you are John Wayne⁴³ handpainted fluorescent warning: LAST JULY A GUY WAS MURDERED HERE AND ROBBED OF HIS CARTIER WATCH AND STABBED IN THE GUTS with under-scrawling: "Glad to hear someone's got guts,"! (Kramer 1978, p. 137-138).

The myths of the waterfront coalesce into a vision of a utopian ideal in these writers' version of the gay colony, and as insiders it allows us to understand the colonies perception of its own colonial zone on the waterfront. A utopian world of love, sex, friendship, free of society and the law, a new frontier, *a city on a hill*; depicted in religious iconography and the language of the divinity. Holleran calls the West Street of '*a dozen bars, a string of parked trucks, abandoned piers, [and] empty lots*' –a '*Via Dolorosa*'⁴⁴ and '*always the Puerto Ricans, the angels, who take the form of messenger boys*' part of a '*communion of saint*' (1978, pp. 110, 131, 132); for White the piers were a '*ruined cathedral*', where the '*wind said incantations*' and '*we were isolated men at prayer*' (1978, p. 1-4); Ginsberg⁴⁵ '*purgatoried their torsos night after night*', '*who let themselves be f*cked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists, and screamed*

⁴³ The cowboy myth.

⁴⁴ Bell and Valentine (1995), place the *street* and the *night* as represented by Holleran's *Dancer from the Dance* (1978) as the fulfilment of a gay version of the American dream.

⁴⁵ Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956) was from a different generation to the gay writers of the 1970s, however this poem sets a precedent for those writers in its frank depiction of sex and its insistence on biblical reference and hence is included here.

with joy, who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the sailors' (1956); in Picano, *'the smoke descend[ed] again and form[ed] a flat halo directly over Gary's head'* (1975, p. 123) emphasis added.

This is the waterfront as utopian myth, a construct of a possible glamorous life, for the burgeoning homosexual identity. But this is too simplistic a view of the 1970s homosexual experience. Anita Bryant was on the public stage in that decade publicly decrying homosexuals. She was pushing for the reversal of the scant few rights homosexuals had managed to gain in a few small municipal districts across the country. Homosexuals had no spatial rights, they were regularly the victims of physical assault and the police were unprepared to intercede in their protection. The utopian waterfront in the 1970s gay fiction ignored the parallel exploration of the dangers of those seeking out sex there-⁴⁶ Lovett has documented several murders that took place on the piers during the seventies in his documentary *Gay Sex in the 70s* (2005), and they depict a very different sense of the ruin. Neither unfortunately is the homosexual experience explored outside of the gay urban populations of New York and San Francisco, nor are those marginalized by their closet condition explored, and hence the utopian vision becomes tempered.

Similarly in tempering the utopian ruin, we must acknowledge that although there is a seeking out of the ruin for homosexual sex, we must not overlook how in reality there most likely was ambivalence to this *ruined landscape*. The position of the piers within the gay-ghetto of the West Village and their proximity to gay bars and meeting places, led to the piers becoming a mere convenience. There was no need to introduce a purely anonymous sexual encounter to either person's lives (their apartments for example) and so the waterfront was an available social convenience, to carry out such acts. The piers then worked as the equivalent to the *pay-by-the-hour* motel used for non-committed heterosexual sexual encounters.

⁴⁶ When they are mentioned by Kramer (1978) they are intended to heighten sexual intrigue.

Zone of Abjection

When the homosexual waterfront is viewed from the vantage of the heterocentric norm of the city (the island's center), the *clone zone* becomes a *zone of abjection*- a negative. There are two elements to the conception of a zone of abjection on the waterfront, which approximately exists on either side of Stonewall; the legal and medical view on homosexuality and the perception by consequence, of its location; and secondly the abject created by the acts of sex themselves as they proliferated in the 1970s.⁴⁷

The fringe location and criminal element- understanding the homosexual as illegal '*sex psychopath*' (Carter, 2004, p. 15) the *other*- created '*marginality as instruments of political subversion and cultural transgression*' (McLeod, 2000, p. 182) on the waterfront. It was a space of abjection where systems and order were subverted. This was in contrast to the ordered society of the West Village away from the waterfront, which was controlled as if an institutional asylum with '*insidious control and policing of the body*' (184)⁴⁸ expressed through '*move on faggots, move on*' (Carter, 2004, p. 17). Because it was both illegal- through anti-drag laws and anti-sodomy laws- and a medical disease to be homosexual in an era pre-Stonewall, it is understandable how their spatial zones became deemed zones of abjection, as for Kristeva both crime and the wretched fear of disease are abject.⁴⁹ The disease of homosexuality was seen as a threat to society and hence its suppression and confinement to the edge (within the *cordon sanitaire* provided by the waterfront); as D'Emilio notes:

⁴⁷ It is also possible to argue that a perception of a zone of abjection still remained at least in iconography of the waterfront location and space as a zone of abjection that is a layover from the period of Joe Docks and the gangsters, and from its physical periphery.

⁴⁸ This is somewhat an inversion of Foucault who places the asylum and this control on the margin; whereas the waterfront of the Village was identifiable for its very essence of disorder. However, the waterfront as a place of sexual initiation and a colony of homosexuals does adhere to McLeod's essay within which Foucault's perception of the social order of the edge, acutely acknowledges our (and the colonizers) rank in society. I take as my understanding of Foucault from McLeod's essay (2000[1996]).

⁴⁹ It should be noted that I do not deal with homophobia or the phobias tackled in Kristeva, as a form of abjection, but in a simplistic form the waterfront becomes something to be homophobic about.

'The most widely discussed books were Irving Bieber's psychoanalytic study, Homosexuality (1962), and a report issued in 1964 by the New York Academy of Medicine. Both works held fast to a classification of same-gender sexuality as a disease, while the latter went even further by arguing that the phenomenon was becoming increasingly prevalent and endangering the welfare of society' (1983, p. 144) emphasis added.

The waterfront then in the 1960s existed for the onlooker of the city norm, as a place of the abject; *'a topsy-turvy world where all [] breeding was meaningless, where regular social behavior was unnecessary'* (Mathias, 1988, p. 39)- the very order of society was in danger down by the trucks at the end of Christopher Street.

On the *post-Stonewall* waterfront, the abjection felt by the city norm, expresses itself through the bodily nature of the same-gender sexual activity that was acted out within its spatial environs. Although it must be realized, the production of the regurgitation that is the essence of abjection is difficult to measure in the non-colony occupant of the heteronormative city, as in many respects it exists in the imagination of those who would suffer abjection.⁵⁰ It is therefore through the texts of the gay writers in the 1970s themselves, that we can deduce through Kristeva, elements that *could* cause abjection, for at the very least these topics exist as impolite discussion in normal society and at the other extreme are policed sexual activities.

Kristeva notes that sperm, although belonging to the borders of the body has no *'polluting value'* (182, p. 71), which was written prior to the advent of Aids and the disease associated with this bodily excretion. It is therefore inaccurate to refer to the male ejaculate in the 1970s as creating abjection.⁵¹ The writers of the period do provide detailed accounts of anal

⁵⁰ Whether or not this is homophobia's manifestation is beyond this study.

⁵¹ *Therefore we must ignore sperm as an abject bodily fluid in the 1970s.* However by the 1980s sperm enters the arena of a secretion representing death, but by then the sexual colony has already dissipated (pier collapse). We must not ignore that Aids most

and oral sex being conducted on the piers, both of which fall under both sodomy laws and unproductive sex, and hence cause abjection. Homosexual sexual activity is outside of the insertive,⁵² (assuming that as the norm) and existing as an act in the location of the waterfront results in those outside the colony being in a position to apply abject status on the colony's terrain.

likely began in New York on the waterfront at the Bicentennial in 1976 (Shilts 1987), however it was unknown to the colony at that time, it was a silent abjection and therefore was a latent fixture placed upon the colony.

⁵² As a description of the norm, that is sex based on procreation, where all other forms are deviant (Levine and Troiden 1988).

Decline Of The Colony

There is essentially one event that ends the sexual colony on the piers- the pier sheds collapse- disappearance of the enclosed sexual terrain. However, the advent of Aids both desecrated the Clone population and tempered the colony's activities.

Terrain Disappearance

By the 1980s the colony's terrain has burnt down, rooted, collapsed into the Hudson River and ultimately carted away by the Army Corp of Engineers. Although the flat bed of the pier in many cases remains, the enclosures that had been used for sexual activity are gone. The shadow cast and *night-extender* of the derelict elevated Miller Highway has also been removed exposing the whole waterfront to the light. The zone of abjection is exposed and no longer can function. This is best described in photographs from the period (figs 4.22, 4.23) and in the pier conditions.

The condition of the piers was as follows:

- **Pier 40** is still standing and rented out as a car park- it remains off limits to the colony.
- **Pier 42** is a naked empty pier deck.
- **Pier 45** is still standing in 1982, but by 1988 is a naked empty deck.
- **Pier 46** is still standing in 1982, but by 1988 is a naked empty deck.
- **Pier 48** is a skeleton in 1980 and completely gone by 1985.⁵³
- **Pier 49** has been an empty naked deck since the mid 1970s and by the late 1980s is no longer connected to the city and existed as an island and is therefore off limits.
- **Pier 50** is gone completely in the 1980s.

⁵³ The legal battles to stop *Westway* ended in 1985, and that same year the city abandoned the plan to landfill the West side waterfront, since 1974 when the project began the physical infrastructure of the waterfront collapsed from lack of investment and upkeep.

- **Pier 51** is a naked empty pier deck and only half its original length remains.
- **Pier 52-** the original pier 52 has been replaced by a new salt shed. The pier that is now designated pier 52 is within the Gansevoort Peninsula and under the control and use of the Sanitation Department and hence off limits to the public or the colony.
- **Pier 53** remained as a berth for the New York City fireboat.



Fig 4.22: The Elevated Miller Highway collapsing in 1982 on to West Street; looking South, pier 48 is to the immediate right (unseen), and West Eleventh Street is to the left (approximately); The Twin Towers are further South on West Street. The street and the waterfront are exposed!

These physical changes on the waterfront opened up the whole dockside vista; it was exposed to the light and this lack of spatial enclosure curtailed sexual activity. Also, the gay colony of West Street was expanding outwards and northwards into the many vacant buildings in the Chelsea neighborhood, where bars and clubs had begun to open in the early 1980s, *'Chelsea is happening, the Village is dead'* (Picano, 2007, p. 110). The art galleries formerly of SoHo, had begun to move into the abandoned warehouses in West Chelsea, with Dia leading the

way in 1982, which signaled a push north from SoHo and the nether regions of the West Village.



Fig 4.23: Looking North in the early 1990s; Pier 40 is still in use as a car park; pier 42 , 45 and 46 are visible, their sheds are gone and only their naked decks remain; the enclosure of the shed has been exposed.

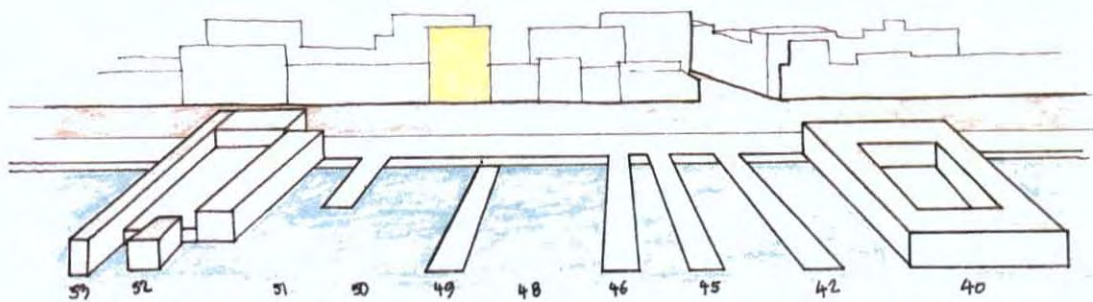


Fig 4 24: The waterfront condition in 1988; the 'home away from home', has all but disappeared; and the waterfront is exposed to the light; the elevated Miller Highway has been demolished, and the pier sheds have collapsed, leaving naked pier decks; the interior is destroyed on the waterfront.

Aids and the Death of the Clone

The other agent of change in the 1980s was the advent of Aids, but the impact of Aids is difficult to pin on any change in *behavior* on the waterfront, as the places of sexual activity- the pier sheds- had collapsed independent of the epidemics effect on the homosexual population of New York. Although it is worth noting, a general reduction in sexual promiscuity in the period of the late 80s and the ending of a sexually free environment is well documented by Kramer (1985), Feinberg (1989) and Sontag (1988) amongst others. Levine over the course of several articles in the 1980s explores the affect Aids had on the clone, which ultimately led to the *death of the clone* and how the colony's behavior was tempered following the epidemic, *'he now sits home alone and very depressed. He has radically changed his lifestyle. Why? Fear of the "gay cancer"'* (1984, p. 138). By 1988, in New York City the leading cause of death of 30 to 44 year old men (the demographic of the clone colony) was Aids and its related illnesses,⁵⁴ and this reality of a population prematurely dying can be regarded as a contributing factor to the decline of the colony. Where once gay men had sought out the romance of the ruin, the ruin now sought out the gay man, in an act devoid of romance; the collapsing skeletons of the piers become in a post-colony waterfront, merely a metaphor for the muscle atrophy and wastage of Aids.

⁵⁴ from NYC Department of Health, January 11, 1988, as quoted in Kimmel and Levine (1989).

Conclusion

In the post-shipping waterfront a new condition of sexual colony became inured in the vacated piers. A whole world developed with a completely new occupant and the waterfront was transformed. This was also the beginning of the transformation of the waterfront from the world of work and industry to one of recreation.

The forces of the *Reformer* in both control of the homosexual in the Village, which led to his venturing farther West to the waterfront and the reformers plans for the waterfront, through *Westway*, which eventually left the waterfront in a limbo for eleven years were instrumental in the creation and expansion of the colony. This was a colony created by external forces as much as internal; the view of the colony also was double- one of utopia from inside and one of abjection from the onlooker in the *city-proper*.

The period of eleven years during the battle over *Westway*, essentially though unintentionally, boxes in the *Clone Zone* on the waterfront. The demise of both *Westway* and the piers by 1985 and the affects of Aids in the same period heightened the ephemeral nature of the colony- a mere decade.

The homosexual experience has changed a lot since the era on the waterfront. Aids ravaged a generation, breaking the continuity between the 1970s and the present. In the 1970s there was a desire amongst homosexuals to create a new version of living. But in the aftermath of Aids, the political and social cause of homosexuality has moved towards the quest for marriage. Marriage is based upon the normalization of homosexuality and is a means to distance current homosexual generations from the abjection and stigma caused by Aids.⁵⁵ There is however also an undercurrent of longing and nostalgia for the 1970s, particularly what is referred to as pre-condom sex. This coupled with the political statement (as bumper sticker or t-

⁵⁵ Marriage implies monogamy while Aids was regularly seen as a disease of promiscuity.

shirt) of *Get Your Laws Out of My Bedroom* is generally related to the regulation of sexual acts in the United States, by both sodomy laws on the conservative right and insisting on condom use on the liberal left. The 1970s waterfront therefore in contemporary culture holds the appeal of an easier, freer more liberated time.



**Get Your Laws Out
Of My Bedroom**

Fig 4.25. Bumper Stick sold at www.gaymart.com

5.0. THE LEGENDARY CHILDREN

*'We're Here, We're Queer! Give Us Back Our F*cking Pier!'*

Chant of LGBTQ youths protesting the Hudson River Park's suppression of their terrain, in a pier protest: October 16, 2004.

With the evisceration of the pier sheds as enclosed spaces of sexual experience and the subsequent exposed decks, the clone colony migrated away. It was replaced by the next identifiable group of occupants- the *LGBTQ Youth*- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Queer (Street kids).¹ They were always present as part of the homosexual colony on the waterfront, however they were subsumed within a general gay zone on the waterfront during the 1970s, before re-emerging to dominant on the piers in a *post-destruction* waterfront. Unlike the previous two colonies discussed in this paper, the LGBTQ Youth still exists on the waterfront today, and unlike both *Joe Docks* and the *Clone*, (whose zones existed as a distinct marginal area) this new younger colony does not exist independent of the city, but interacts with it, extending its terrain into the center of the Island, via Christopher Street to Washington Square Park. This colony comes face to face with both the *gentrifier* of the waterfront and the predominantly white, wealthy residents of the waterfront neighborhood. The colony has to fight

¹ Colloquial term to describe the LGBTQ youth on the waterfront.

for its own survival. The LGBTQ Youth therefore is the very face of a changing waterfront today and the remaining link to the marginal status of the original waterfront of New York.

The Colony

The LGBTQ colony is made up by a very diverse group of race, age, gender, residential status and socio-economic position. The colony is a microcosm of the melting pot of New York City. The age range is 13-24 years of age and is predominantly Black and Hispanic in its racial make-up². There is a large portion of homelessness in the colony, representing 35% of the total homeless in New York City (fig 5.1).³ Unlike Joe Docks and the Clone who generally resided in the area, or had a large portion of local residents in the colony, the LGBTQ are almost exclusively non-resident in the Village and travel to this terrain in greatest numbers in the evening and weekends, with the largest numbers in the warm summer months. The occupants come from the poorer neighborhoods and districts of the northern and outlying boroughs of New York and from New Jersey, *'many of these teenagers live outside Manhattan and are drawn to the Village as a secret haven'* (Kurutz, 2006). As the name of the colony suggests it incorporates every variation in sexual orientation and gender identification. This waterfront occupation for the first time breaks from the domination of the adult male and includes the female and the teenage male.

² Information from *Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment* (FIERCE), a membership based organization representing the rights of the LGBTQ.

³ Data from FEIRCE.



Fig 5.1: Sleeping Rough on Pier 45, 1980s (scene from Fenced OUT)

Fig 5.2: The LGBTQ on Pier 45, 2003

The Colony's Terrain

The *Legendary Children* were similar to the *Clone* in the use of Christopher Street to access the waterfront, however in this colony it becomes more central to the spatial terrain of the LGBTQ, as it forms part of the axis between the waterfront piers and Washington Square Park, both of which represent termini of a route. The colony congregates in both spaces and traverse between the two via Christopher Street (with a concentration West of the subway station on Seventh Avenue). Unlike the previous colonies, which are more locationally concentrated on/ in and near the piers the LGBTQ exist as colonizers of the street; in this colony *'social relations are articulated spatially through movement and containment'* (Rendell 1998: 76), a containment by the streets of their own resort, however unlike Rendell for example, this colony does not *'ramble'* but follows particular self prescribed routes.

The development of this colony, although it existed concurrent with the clone, has its modern origins in the conception of both the Village and the waterfront as a zone of the homosexual, which tolerated diversity; therefore the iconography of place and the margin was a draw for the development of the colony and perhaps these associations are the central reason for its existence. However this area's transportation links and easy access from other boroughs allows for easy congregation; the PATH train connecting New Jersey has its first New York stop

on Christopher Street; the subway station of Christopher Street/ Sheridan Square is on Seventh Avenue which connects via the number 1 train with Harlem and The Bronx, the M8 cross down bus is also at this stop, running down Christopher Street; the West 4th Street/ Washington Square subway station is on Sixth Avenue connecting the area with Queens, Brooklyn and Harlem via the A, B, C, D, E, F, V trains.

Through observation of the group⁴ it is noticeable that they restrict themselves very clearly to the piers, Christopher Street and a direct route to Washington Square Park, via either West 8th Street and MacDougal Street (avoiding Fifth Avenue as it is policed and the doormen of the exclusive co-ops on lower Fifth Avenue whom *keep an eye* on the street) or via Sixth Avenue and West 4th to a lesser degree Waverly Place. In the neighborhood of Greenwich Village (from observation), Christopher Street and West 8th street have not gentrified⁵ like their adjacent streets, there still exist gay bars, sex shops (with explicit window displays) and stores that sell cheaper clothing and fake designer sunglasses; West Eight Street was known for its proliferation of shoe shops, but since 2005 there number has been slipping, with a New York Times report nothing in 2005 that *'twelve empty stores line the block'* but the *'rough and tumble'* street is not attracting new tenants and the street is *'defying the laws of gentrification'* (Hughes, 2005) (fig 5.3).

⁴ The author has viewed the colony from 2002 to 2007 by unintentional default of using the streets in the Village, however in 2008 a walk of Christopher Street and adjacent streets was made to clarify the colony's extent.

⁵ However, there are signs of a very recent change with the opening in December 2008, of the men's designer store Rag & Bone at 100 Christopher Street, situated in a former pornographic video store.



Fig 5.3: The predominantly linear route of the colony from the piers, Christopher Street and across to Washington Square; this line forms the spatial zone of the colony, it is concentrated on the street.

The Beginning

In the 1960s, Carter (2004) notes that the street kids used to hang out in Sheridan Square Park on Christopher Street and sleep (and hustle)⁶ on the piers; they were predominantly racially white back then in contrast to today's diversity, but like the modern colony they existed as young teenagers out on the margins of society:

*'Why had these youths been so totally abandoned? Apparently the reason is that most of them were much more feminine in behavior than the average homosexual man of the time. They were a band of youths from New York City and around the country who were generally not wanted by their families or schools or hometowns because they were so obviously queer. **Hearing that the Village was the best place for them, they found their way there.** At least in the Village they could find others like themselves- or so they thought- but other gay men shunned them... drag queens shunned them.*

⁶ Homosexual prostitution.

People in the apartment buildings around Christopher Park threw things at them from their windows. They were a world unto themselves, cut off by their age and by being so out of control... There was no value placed on these kids by the gay community, by the medical community, by anybody, but mostly by themselves' (Carter, 2004, p. 61)
emphasis added.

Carter also places them at the center of the Stonewall riots, where they were in the fore, confronting the police in a line high kicking and singing:

*'We are the Stonewall girls,
We wear our hair in curls.
We wear no underwear:
We show our pubic hairs' (2004, p.176)*

Their knowledge of the streets enabled them to run, avoid the police and regroup behind the chasing police in yet another chorus line during the riots. However, even with this involvement in the seminal moment of homosexual history they remained marginalized within the community, and in the post-Stonewall decade of the 1970s their existence becomes invisible within the over-riding allure of the clone culture. They no doubt existed in the 1970s, it is that they remain largely undocumented as a separate colony in that period.

The Modern Re-Emergence

By the late 1980s the colony again had cultivated their own independent identity, and in many ways came to the fore with the demise of the sexual colony of the clone and the demise of the clone himself. The waterfront develops with a newly dominant spatial occupier- *The Legendary Children*⁷- that came to fame? / prominence through Jennie Livingston's *Paris is*

⁷ Those entrants who have won categories and trophies at the Balls.

Burning (1990) documentary film. The population covered in this film, congregated on the waterfront at pier 45 and 46; its bulkhead and within Washington Square to hang out, dance, socialize and in some cases *turn tricks*- prostitution to earn money (fig 5.4). *Paris is Burning* explores the *Gay Ball*^{*} scene in New York, and credits the invention of the *Vogue* dance moves to the kids on the piers (fig 5.5, 5.6). Madonna mainstreamed this idea in her song and video *Vogue* (1990), which exposed the marginal *Balls* to a global audience. Despite this influence of the colony, the waterfront would remain the same and any interest in the street kids was short lived.

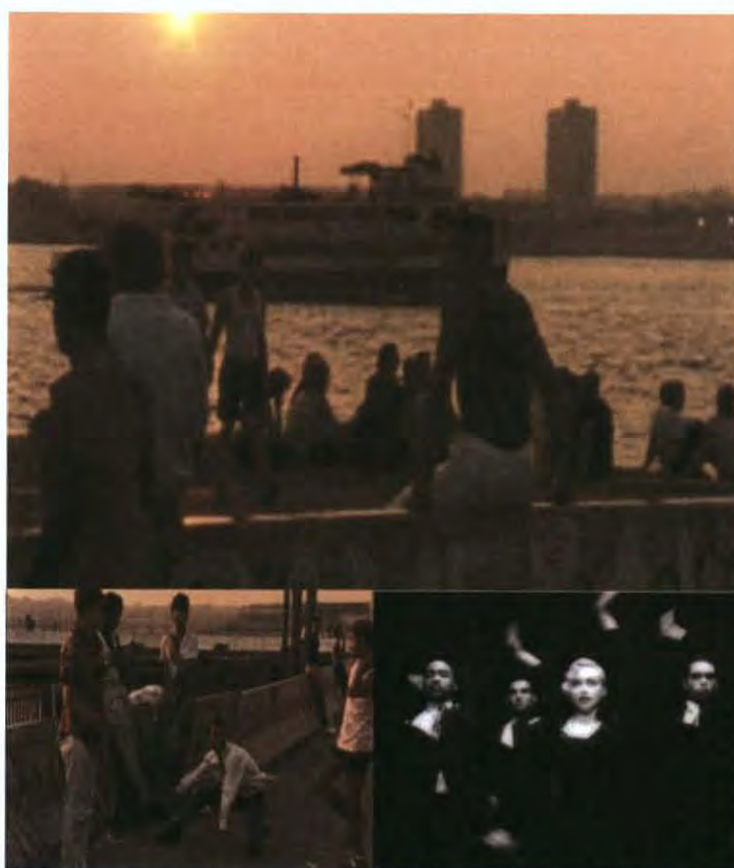


Fig 5.4: The Legendary Children on the Waterfront as a place of refuge and recreation.

Fig 5.5: The colonist '*vogue-ing*', note the kid in the center

Fig 5.6: Madonna music video '*Vogue*' (1990), the same street kid appears at left.

^{*} The Ball is difficult explain, but it is a competition between gay men, in dance, drag, differing identities and modelling/ walking.

Condition of Waterfront (and a marginal historical construct)

The condition of the waterfront as discussed in the pervious chapter- 1985 and the demise of the clone's sexual colony remained through out the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the exposed deck of pier 45 and pier 46, were the central congregation for the kids on the waterfront (fig 5.7).

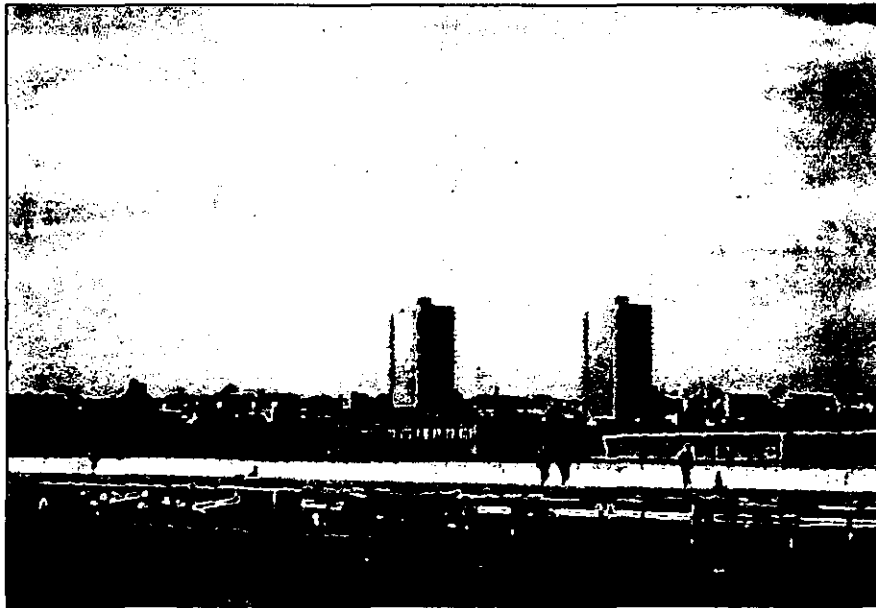


Fig 5.3.7: Pier 45 looking out towards the New Jersey shore in the late 1980s, its derelict condition is countered by the placement of concrete cordons along the edge.

In the 1980s

The condition of the piers was as follows:

- **Pier 40** is still standing and rented out as a car park- it remains off limits to the colony.
- **Pier 42** is a naked empty pier deck.
- **Pier 45** is still standing in 1982, but by 1988 is a naked empty deck.
- **Pier 46** is still standing in 1982, but by 1988 is a naked empty deck.
- **Pier 48** is a skeleton in 1980 and completely gone by 1985.

- **Pier 49** is no longer connected to the city and existed as an island. It is therefore off limits.
- **Pier 50** is gone completely in the 1980s.
- **Pier 51** is a naked empty pier deck and only half its original length remains.
- **Pier 52-** is under the control and use of the Sanitation Department and hence off limits to the public or the colony.
- **Pier 53** remained as a berth for the New York City fireboat.

In the 1990s

The condition of the piers was as follows:

- **Pier 40** is still standing and rented out as a car park- it remains off limits to the colony. However by the late 1990s, there is a token of recreation in the provision of a sports field on the upper deck.
- **Pier 42** is a naked empty pier deck and fenced off. There is no access onto this pier. On the bulkhead of pier 42 a new air vent for the PATH train is built, with landscaped planting and parkland in 1990-91.
- **Pier 45** is a naked deck; in 1994 it is resurfaced in asphalt with a temporary concrete cordon around its edge as part of the interim Hudson River Park Conservancy esplanade.
- **Pier 46** is a naked deck; in 1994 it is resurfaced in asphalt with a temporary concrete cordon around its edge as part of the interim Hudson River Park Conservancy esplanade.
- **Pier 48** is completely gone by 1985.

- **Pier 49** is no longer connected to the city and existed as an island. It is therefore off limits.
- **Pier 50** is gone completely in the 1980s.
- **Pier 51** is a naked empty pier deck and only half its original length remains.
- **Pier 52** is under the control and use of the Sanitation Department and hence off limits to the public or the colony.
- **Pier 53** remained as a berth for the New York City fireboat.

In the 2000s

The Hudson River Park opens in 2003, after closing off the waterfront since 1999 for construction. The park includes a linear esplanade running the length of the waterfront, and the new re-construction of piers 45, 46 (half original length) and 51 (one third its original length). Piers 42 and 49 remain only as pile fields (eco-zones). Pier 40 remains to a large extent for car parking, however the central area and part of the upper deck is now sports fields. Piers 52 and 53 retain their municipal functions- despite provision in the Hudson River Park Act (1998) for its relocation (fig 5.8).⁹

⁹ It should be noted that as of 2008, there is still no relocation of the Sanitation Department, and there is the possibility of it becoming a garbage transportation hub. This possibility of garbage on the waterfront remains along with the LGBTQ colony as the only abject elements remaining on the waterfront.

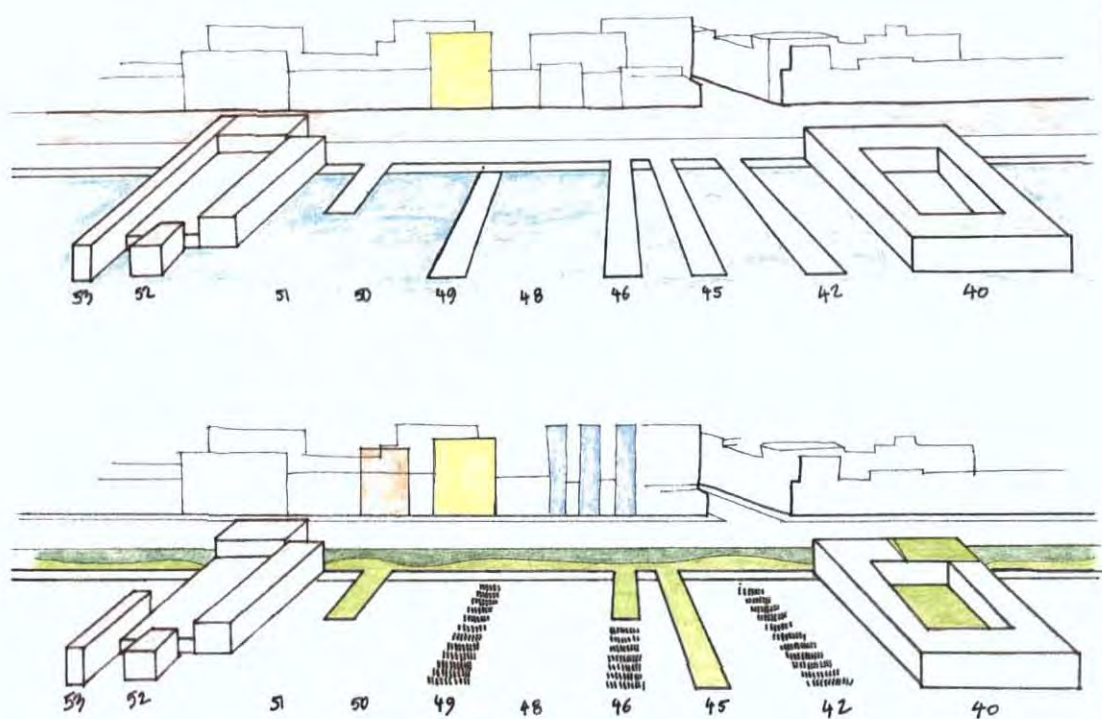


Fig 5.3.8: The piers in 1988 (above) and the Hudson River Park in 2003 (below); the area of piers has again declined; but the bulkhead has been greened into a linear park.

The waterfront still remained as a marginal zone, and its physical structure was added to with the docking of an operational prison ship at pier 40 in the late 1980s. The *Bibby Venture* was originally a *troop-barge* used by the British in the 1982 Falklands War, before being purchased by the New York City Department of Correctional Services and fitted out as a prison (fig 5.9). These 'ships, stacked with human cargo like a freighter loaded with containers, were both an eyesore and a fascinating curiosity' (Gastil, 2002, p. 48), continued to create a sense of marginalism on the waterfront. Following local residential protest and legal challenges, the ship was decommissioned in 1992 and towed away in 1994. The prison ship as short lived (about 5 years) as it was, does however follow an understanding of the waterfront as a location for this marginal activity, and a broader understanding of a zone of abjection existing close to the water away from the city proper.



Fig 5.9: One of the Legendary Children in a scene from *Paris is Burning* (1990), on pier 46 looking South, with the *Bibby Venture* visible in the top right of the image; The *Bibby Venture* Prison Barge in 1994 moored at pier 40, after being decommissioned and awaiting to be towed away.

Greenwich Village's waterfront had its origins in the pier and waterfront edge of *Newgate* prison (1797- 1828), which had its own pier for the transportation of prisoners; it extended from present day Christopher, north to Charles Lane, East to Washington Street and West as far as today's bulkhead line (fig 5.10). It was eventually decommissioned and knocked down to make way for the expansion of the shipping industry, after the opening of *Sing Sing* prison in upstate New York on the Hudson River.



Fig 5.2.10: Newgate Prison on the shore of Greenwich Village (1797- 1828); its position as a waterfront construction is clearly visible in this Mangin-Goerck Plan of 1803.

Greenwich Village had another prominent prison within its environs on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Greenwich Avenue; connected to Jefferson Market Courthouse (constructed in 1873-77), it stood until a new Women's House of Detention was built in the late 1920s

opening in 1932 and remaining in service until 1974, when the prison was demolished. Back on the waterfront a Federal House of Detention existed on West Street as a repository for inmates waiting federal trial in New York, for much of the twentieth century before becoming apartments in 1982; Further north on West Street at Twentieth Street a former YMCA called Seaman's House was converted to the *Bayview* Correctional Facility in 1967¹⁰ operating as a women's prison- creating a triangulation of prison locations on the far West Side. This prison history of the Village and the waterfront is further underscored by the approximately 11,000 prisoners¹¹ who died aboard the sixteen British prison-ships moored in New York harbor from 1776- 1783 during the American war of Independence.

The prison barge although unconnected with the colony of street kids did highlight the marginal status of the waterfront, and how as late as 1994 it was still an outsider zone.

¹⁰ This correctional facility remains in operation today, its new neighbour is the a Jean Nouvel designed condominium; the marginality of a prison it appears does not affront real estate value.

¹¹ The WPA Guide to New York City: The Federal Writer's Project Guide to 1930s New York

Gender and Abjection on the Waterfront

There is an implicit danger in discussing the gender of the *Legendary Children*, because of the representation within the colony of every conceivable mutation of gender and sexuality. The colony exists as a universal form of identity, with no one specific type of character dominating. This is best exemplified in the *Ball* competitions with categories for differing gender identities (noting the contestants are all men):¹²

Male Face (Men's or BQ (Butch Queen)): masculine vs. pretty boy

Female Face (Women's or FQ (Femme Queen)): painted vs. unpainted

Male Body (Men's or BQ): muscular vs. models

Female Body (Women's or FQ): Luscious vs. models

Realness: FQ Realness ('all traces of ones biological maleness must be virtually erased. (or at least hidden)') and BQ Realness ('requires complete camouflage of anything remotely perceived as 'gay': you appear to be a straight man') (Brown 2005).¹³

The colony represents differing gender identities and therefore presents abjection on the waterfront, because it is a distortion of the social norm.



Fig 5.11: Femme- Queen and Homo-Thug; both are young homosexual males; yet identify themselves along different lines of gender and social position.

¹² This distinction is however distorted due to personal identities and gender re-assignment surgery.

¹³ http://balls.houseofenigma.com/cats_are.html

They colony of Legendary Children is connected to the histogram of the waterfront through the masculinity (other than locational connection) of the colony. The dominant occupancy on the waterfront has historically been through the male, *Joe Docks*, the *Gangsters* and the *Clone*, however setting it apart by virtue of gender identities and the presence of lesbian youth. This introduces the female to the waterfront. The other connecting force with the past is in the colony's attempt to fulfill the American Dream. There is a desire in *Paris is Burning* and the real-life characters interviewed, that is a want for something more out of life. When Octavia Saint Laurent says, '*I want to be somebody*', she's inadvertently channeling Brando's '*I could 'a been somebody*', in *On the Waterfront* (1954). Both suffer from a failure to fulfill the American dream, and this lack of achievement marginalizes them with in New York (a city built on success). The colony of the *clone*, was per Bell and Binnie (1998) a fulfillment of the American Dream, however, the dream fails, as it becomes the nightmare of Aids. Broken and unachieved dreams mark the waterfront territory and the legendary children follow this trend, they too fail, and like all broken misbegotten members of society are relegated to the edge. Further as we see below, in the suppression of the colony, we note their inability to control their own spatial existence. They are reminded they do not own the streets. The colony is moved along by the police and this deficient control, undermines the group's presence on the waterfront.

The Reformer

On the post-*Westway* waterfront (after 1985), there was Reformer action to further develop the waterfront, for both the much needed Highway to replace the fallen elevated Miller Highway, and a desire to push forward on the provision of a public park on the site of the

derelict piers.¹⁴ In 1994 an interim esplanade opened on the waterfront in Greenwich Village as a forerunner to the Hudson River Park (fig 5.3.12).



Fig 5.3.12: The Esplanade along the waterfront, the remains of the pier pilings of pier 42 are just visible through the railings, and the blue building is pier 40; the trees are part of the Morton Street PATH Train Vent development of 1990-1991. Of Note is the use of the fence/ railings guarding the edge, there is a clear demarcation between the land and the water.

This esplanade brought the marginal zone back under the control of the city; the once forgotten waterfront now was under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, and under the surveillance of the *Parks Enforcement Patrol* in 1997¹⁵ (Bahr, 1997). This policing marks the first steps in suppressing the waterfront's zone of abjection and threatened the colony of the Legendary Children; now '*hanging-out*' could be regarded as '*loitering*' and therefore a '*quality-of-life*'¹⁶ offense and a crime in New York City. In 1996 a curfew was imposed on the waterfront in the Village, closing each night from midnight to 5:30am. The municipal government- the reformer-eventually had *reformed* the waterfront.

¹⁴ A more thorough look at this process is in the chapter The Mamas, as it overlaps with the street kids' colony.

¹⁵ Following a street protest by gay groups and drag queens called '*Street Panic!*', protesting about the *Disney-fication* of the piers, and chanting '*Whose Piers? Our Piers!*' as reported in the 'Village' section of the The New York Times, Sept 5, 1997.

¹⁶ Quality-of-life offenses were behaviour that was previously un-regulated or not-criminal, that became an offense in the late twentieth century, including, loitering, homelessness, (for a period jay-walking), begging, noise, loud music etc.

The Zone Of Abjection And Its Suppression

The *zone of abjection* connected with the LGBTQ colony on the waterfront, is most evidently observed in the steps taken to suppress their terrain, rather than understanding it as being independent of *suppression*. Like the *Clone colony*, the *Legendary Children* regarded the waterfront as a safe space, a place of freedom where they could express their own identity away from the interference of the city, a place gay 'teenagers claimed for themselves and fashioned into a sort of West Side Cashbah'; it was outsiders observing the colony that regarded it as *improper*, reporting 'open-air drug dealing and public urination' (Kurutz, 2006).

A look at Quality-of-Life

Quality-of-Life as a political idea was the dominant theory of social control and policing in New York by the opening of the esplanade in 1994, and I include it here as it leads to an understanding of the classification of the *Street kids*, as being *outside* the law; its origins also demonstrate the shifting polity of New York.

In an early national idea of President Johnson (1963- 1969) in his *War on Poverty* in the mid-1960s, *quality-of-life* was a federal initiative to alleviate urban poverty and aid in rebuilding of urban communities as a concept of the future being a progressive improvement. Again on the national level President Nixon (1969- 1974) in his creation of the *Environmental Protection Agency* in 1970, used the term *quality-of-life*, however as Vitale notes,

'By focusing on the environment, he [Nixon] gave "quality-of-life" a more conservative meaning in the sense of conserving or recreating a past environmental condition. Nixon thus succeeded in both shifting the focus from the disadvantaged to the middle class and placing government in the role of

preserving and recapturing the past rather than building a new future.¹⁷

(2008, p. 37)

This shift from alleviating poverty and building a brighter future, to the middle class and *backward looking* also existed in the use/ exploitation of the term at the local level of New York politics as detailed by Vitale (2008). Each of New York's mayors since Wagner (1954-1965) used *quality-of-life* to varying degrees:

Robert F. Wagner, 1954-1965:

Used term in regard to the disadvantaged and in line with the federal *War on Poverty* and the future.

John V. Lindsay, 1966- 1973:

Used term to now include all New Yorkers, but still with the concept of the future.

Abraham D. Beame, 1974-1977:

Did not use the term, possibly because the fiscal crisis during his term had a negative impact upon the quality of life in the city.

Edward I. Koch, 1978- 1989:

Began using the term in 1981, predominantly as an environmental issue of clean streets, by 1984 was using it as means to justify law enforcement (broken windows, 1982) for the cleaning of Times Square and graffiti in the subways; aimed at the middle class and the glory of the past.

David N. Dinkins, 1990- 1993:

Brought the use of the term back to the disadvantaged, and the possibility of a bright improvement for the urban poor of New York.

Rudolph W. Giuliani, 1994- 2001:

Quality-of-life was a major part of both his election campaign and method of governance; it concentrated on the upper middle class, business interests, crime and police enforcement.

Mayor Dinkins (1990- 1993) incidentally did implement his *Safe Streets- Safe City Program*, which could be understood as a *quality-of-life* initiative that provided for the increase of policing numbers and social services, paid for through dedicated taxes. Dinkins also

¹⁷ It should be noted that this argument readily mirrors the *anti-Westway* stance in the 1970s-80s.

instigated the police removal of a homeless encampment in Tompkins Square Park in May 1991- closing the park and bulldozing part of it- a removal (suppression) of a *zone of abjection* and the colonies of homeless and drug users that lived and congregated there (fig 5.13).



Fig 5.3.13: The open display of drug use (and disease- Aids) in the East Village in the 1980s; the removal of the homeless colony and shantytown in Tompkins Square Park in 1991.

He did not however frame these programs in the *quality-of-life* argument or *broken windows* theory (see below), but as a direct response to the escalation of crime¹⁸ and the *crack* epidemic in the city. He did not, as Mayor Giuliani (1994- 2001) would do, regard the homeless as criminal, but his increase in police cadet numbers, did allow Giuliani to further implement elements of Dinkins' *Safe Streets- Safe City Program*, as the cadets graduated during Giuliani's term, pushing up police numbers post 1994.

Broken Windows

It was Mayor Giuliani who propelled *quality-of-life* forward to its strongest relationship with social control, policing and the *broken windows* theory, as political concept of urban governance (Vitale 2008), which centered on the appropriation of blame for the city's problems on the poor.¹⁹ *Broken Windows* was a seminal article in The Atlantic Monthly in 1982, written by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, which proposed that the presence of minor

¹⁸ The number of murders reached a recorded peak of 2,154 in 1991.

¹⁹ 'Much of the impetus for this came from Giuliani's interactions with the neoconservative Manhattan Institute' (Vitale 2008: 43), and the framing of broken windows as a politically right wing theory; this blame on the poorest members of New York's demographic was also the response to the Fiscal Crisis of 1975; as those with least power were portrayed as the cause of all the city's problems.

disorders- a broken window left unrepaired- can lead to further serious crimes, as an unfixed window as the example, allows for the perception that *'seem to signal that "no one cares."*'

'We suggest that "untended" behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls. A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other's children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few month, to an inhospitable and frightening jungle' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

As this theory can be applied to the condition of the defunct waterfront- where unchecked dereliction let the area be viewed as unregulated- it is understandable how its mainstreaming and progress to an established park, would be included in (though not named specifically) in the Mayor's *Police Strategy No.5: Reclaiming the Public Spaces of New York*, compiled in conjunction with his police commissioner William Bratton (whose zero-tolerance policing of the subway system, had helped eradicate graffiti), an initiative that acknowledged that *people no longer felt safe in public places*, and used broken windows and its attendant quality-of-life policing to re-order public space in the city, to both reduce crime/ disorder, and the perception of crime/ disorder. The method of this policing was *'order-maintenance policing, that emphasizes proactive enforcement of misdemeanor laws and zero tolerance for minor offenses'* (Harcourt, 2001, p. 2). Giuliani also introduced the criminalization of homelessness (an occupant of the waterfront (*street kids*) and the colony of the *abject*) and panhandling, adding them to the list of offenses that disrupted public space. This plan essentially was designed to suppress the *zone of abjection*.

As Vitale contends that public space was no longer in use by the late 1980s, due to the public's safety concerns, stemming from crime and homelessness, *'converging in many people's perceptions, creating a major crisis for neighborhoods'* (2008, p. 127); then use of the

waterfront by the colony is both an anomaly and the problem. The colony in the late 1980s and early 1990s was dominated by the LGBTQ youth- who were referred to as 'gay street gangs' (Livingston dir. 1990). However, the 'presence of street gang members in public places has intimidated many law-abiding citizens' (Harcourt, 2001, p. 2), according to studies by Chicago's city council, which places the LGBTQ youth colony in the position of being a disorderly spatial presence- a zone of abjection (fig 5.14). This *Gay Street Gang* colony being predominantly part of the urban poor and minorities, suffer from the same stereotyped racial profile of the urban criminal- 'black male teenager' (NYT: October 2, 2000)- thus perceived as intimidating- 'village residents and workers are not happy about their presence' (Kurutz, 2006), particularly in light, of use by some members of the colony to describe themselves as 'homo-thugs', (Life on Christopher Street, dir., Clara 2002).



Fig 5.14: Mapping the Zone of Abjection- the colony's extents are highlighted in pink.
The prison ship is indicated in red at pier 40

As there was continued pressure on the colony²⁰ from the police and the neighborhood's insistence on taking back control of the streets, the colony formed themselves an advocacy group called FEIRCE (*Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment*) in 2000, as a body to organize and defend the group of street kids in ensuring their spatial continuance on the waterfront, '*FIERCE was founded on the principle that LGBTQ youth [of color] must realize and manifest our own social and political power to change our conditions, to shape our futures, and to become effective agents of change in our communities*' (from the FIERCE website)²¹. Their central campaign commitment is in securing a space for the colony in the plans to develop pier 40 to community and commercial use and limiting police pressure on the colony in their use on the West side piers.

During the construction of the Hudson River Park in 2000-2003, the waterfront was fenced off and the colony had no access to the piers (fig 5.15), the affect of this was recorded in the documentary *Fenced OUT* (Paper Tiger Television & The Neutral Zone 2002). The fence removed the colony from the piers and they were forced to hang out on the bulkhead and cycle track that runs along it, unfortunately police action also prevented congregations here, '*you can not stop and hang out*' (Police officer recorded in *Fenced OUT*), you must keep walking. Following the opening of the Hudson River Park in 2003, the colony has regained access to its terrain on the piers. However, there is a continued unease between the colony and the village residents, and the colony now exists within a heavily policed zone, '*to appease residents, the police presence around the pier would be increased, with up to eight officers patrolling the area overnight from Thursdays to Sundays*' (Kurutz, 2006). The waterfront retains its colony of *Legendary Children* and the zone they inhabit, however now it exists under suppression.

²⁰ In 2006, there was a plan to push the colony north to pier 54, away from the village and towards a pier away from the cultural and spiritual center of Christopher Street, but more importantly a plan by the city to move the kids away from the upper middle class residential waterfront, to an area of offices and remaining elements of manufacturing (The Villager Vol. 75, No. 42- March 8, 2006).

²¹ <http://fierceny.org/index.php?s=84>



Fig 5.15: The Fence on the waterfront in 2003, with construction of the Hudson River Park beyond.



Fig 5.3.16: The colony sitting on the railings in Washington Square Park; and In 2008, the fence again is used as a tool in the suppression of the colony; in the city's refurbishment of Washington Square Park, the railings within the park have been replaced with a new fence that prohibits using the fence to sit, this was highlighted by *curbed.com*, as a destruction of the bohemian spirit of the park.

Conclusion

The Legendary Children have become a waterfront axiom in Greenwich Village, existing continuously since at least the 1960s, in varying degrees of dominance. They remain as the last vestige of an abject past on the piers and their categorization as '*gangs*' highlights both their social abjection and the threat to their existence through police action (gang= criminal). Their identity therefore is compromised by this police control on their terrain and the control diminishes the power of their colony and they are further marginalized on the margin.

Their colony (and the zone they inhabit) therefore exists under a thumb of suppression, held under by a *continued normalization and centralization* of the waterfront. As the waterfront has gentrified around them and the city takes a great role in control of the waterfront, the colony must eek out its own space by congregating in tight groups to assert their own spatial control. This action however, lead to even *further crack down by police*, as *it is seen as threatening* to the white wealthy residents of the waterfront neighborhood.

It is consequently hard to determine how as a colony they will fair in the future on the waterfront, but one thing is for sure, they won't slink away quietly. Their flamboyance on the waterfront highlights the potential for excitement on the city's edge. Their departure, I believe would lessen the spectacle and events a waterfront park needs in order to avoid Jane Jacobs' assertion that boring waterfront parks eventually themselves become the dereliction they replace (1961).

6.0 THE MAMAS

'Alleviate the blighted, unhealthy, unsanitary and dangerous conditions that characterize much of the area''

The Hudson River Park Act, September 8, 1998

Today walking through the Hudson River Park on the waterfront of Greenwich Village, there is a class of occupant who appears to be the opposite of the waterfront's former abject self. That occupant- *the mother and baby*- associated as she is with gentrification- provides a picture of transformation. However, even as apparently newly visible she is, she has had a tentative position on the waterfront running back to the earliest post-shipping activities.¹ She therefore helps provide a basis from which to demonstrate the long process of change on the waterfront as public space. One must not be mistaken however, into thinking she is the new great white hope of gentrification or assume she is in conflict with the waterfront's abject elements.² Her layer of

¹ And not forgetting during the era of shipping as Mrs. Joc Docks, who lived adjacent to the waterfront. She did not however hold a visible position on the piers.

² The organized crime, the homosexual male and the LGBTQ youth.

history provides an interesting understanding of abjection, social norms, politics, economics and real estate.



Fig 6.1: *The HRP Mamas*; and bucolic recreation, yoga and meditation on Pier 45- (a waterfront of peace and harmony?)

The use of the term *Mamas*, stems from the *Hudson River Park Mamas*,³ a community driven neighborhood mothers group that meet in the waterfront parks of Lower Manhattan. The Hudson River Park Mamas immediately present a very different waterfront from either the longshoremen or the homosexuals and provide evidence beyond the physical that the waterfront has been spatially transfigured. As a group that identify themselves by gender it actively denotes the waterfront change in gender terms, with the female gaining an official foothold spatially on the waterfront itself for the first time.⁴ The process and the developments that culminate in this group began immediately after the end of the shipping industry, and are linked to both the developer driven gentrification process and community activity on re-using the vacant piers. It parallels the post-shipping abjection but is a counterpoint too it by gender and non-criminality. However, for all the positive associations and delight that the waterfront has shrugged off its *theater of recurrent crimes* reputation, allowing the Mamas use its spaces safely

³ 'The Hudson River Park Mothers' Group (nicknamed affectionately HRP Mamas by its members) is a social and support network for mothers of children born in 2003 or later who reside in Lower Manhattan. With over 1000 verified local member moms, 2 Yahoo! Group message boards, 1000+ online messages posted each month, a calendar of volunteer run playgroups, select social events, newsletters and email blasts about local activities, HRP Mamas offers unparalleled support and resources to families residing in Lower Manhattan' The Hudson River Park Mamas homepage [online] (Updated 2009) Available at <http://hrpmamas.clubexpress.com/> (accessed on 3 August 2009)

⁴ Although the longshoreman's wife was important to the life and space that the longshoremen inhabited she was excluded from the waterfront itself, existing in the domestic realm adjacent to the waterfront, not on it.

(this is a real positive change for a city), why is there a continued negative attachment applied to the female (mother and baby) in gentrified neighborhoods?

I am aware that using the terms *Mamas* places a negative attachment of blame on the female for causing gentrification, but I use it to both highlight the negativity and because the *HRPMamas* use of the term on the waterfront denotes the possibility of a positive possession of the phrase as an inversion of the negative.⁵ Mothers are used as an identifiable face of gentrification, whose presence on the street denotes a process of change. Pileggi in a 1969 article for New York Magazine notes '*more baby carriages*' and '*hiphuggered mothers*' as emblems of the gentrification of the Upper West Side. That association continues to be the easiest method of noting if a neighborhood has gentrified- if the streets become safe enough for the mother than has the neighborhood has shaken off abjection? However instead of seeing the mama as a symptom of change she suffers the blame. She is viewed as the power eliminating the abject and marginal- without any questioning how she manages such a feat, considering the powerlessness of women in the urban environment.

Even a cursory glance at the comments about mothers left on the Brooklyn real estate blog⁶ www.brownstoner.com, are illuminating in their negative attachment of mothers to the gentrification of the city, '*personally I'd love to see less strollers out on the street... I want to throttle the lazy parents*'⁷ - the mother is blamed as the destroyer of the city and her stroller as the tank of doom. This association of the mother with a stroller and gentrification is a coded means of asserting class and race on newly gentrified neighborhoods. In poor black neighborhoods in New York the presence of black mothers and babies is a sign of poverty and a lack of gentrification.

⁵ Similar to the inversion of the negative in the use of queer and fag in gay by homosexuals and the use of nigger and nigga' by black Americans. However inclusion in each group is required for use of such terms.

⁶ One has to wonder what those railing against gentrification are doing reading a real estate blog.

⁷ http://www.brownstoner.com/brownstoner/archives/2008/10/the_stroller_wa.php similar comments also often appear in the New York Times, www.curbed.com and New York Magazine in response to any article related to gentrification.

This negative association is ultimately intended to retain public space for the male. The female in reconfigured space continues to hold no power, but she does bear the blame.⁸ This leads to *the Mamas* becoming an entity of transgression in space- as the negative face the public has chosen to use as the embodiment of developer driven, class based gentrification, and not as a justified user of space. The Mama, far from becoming a legitimate spatial occupant, has therefore become the vilified destroyer (cleanser?) of New York City.

There is a very real double play in operation, if the mother with baby is to be the simplified alternative to the abject on the waterfront. She must engineer a leap of social change if she is to be considered the moral order. We would have to forget her traditional place in the sphere of the home. We must appreciate also the real threat that exists for women in public space (the threat of rape). In this chapter I explore the origins of the waterfronts gentrification through real estate development and the development of the Hudson River Park before questioning the notion of 'public space' within a gentrified framework.

⁸ It appears also to depend on when you arrived, with each successive arriviste being blamed for gentrification, with the mother because of her junior off spring seen continuously as the newest arrival.

Residential Gentrification

Beginning in 1965 (the conversion of Bell Labs), there was a shift in the waterfront neighborhood from a domination of industrial use to residential use, through the conversion of industrial buildings into residential apartment buildings. This was a change in the fabric of the area- filling the neighborhood with people who had a vested interest in its streets, as opposed to the transient nature of shift workers.⁹ This change towards a more residential waterfront falls into traditional understandings of *gentrification*, as a process that '*involves the restructuring of urban space for a wealthier clientele*' (Hackworth, 2007, p.98). This *wealthier clientele* (upper middle class) replaced the working class (longshoremen) originally working on the waterfront and resident in the neighborhood amongst the warehouses. After the end of the shipping industry, the working classes left the waterfront area to follow work to the outer boroughs of New York and the expanding container ports in New Jersey. This *restructuring*- adaptive reuse- first occurred with the conversion (designed by Richard Meier) of the former Bell Telephone Laboratories (a city block sized industrial building) between 1965 and 1970, into a residential building with 383 apartments.¹⁰ Bell Labs is located at 455- 465 West Street, on the waterfront opposite pier 49¹¹ between Bank Street, Bethune Street and Washington Street and after the conversion it was renamed *Westbeth*. The conversion of industrial buildings did not however cause the movement of the working class out of the neighborhood, but the decline of industry and manufacturing prior to residential conversion that spurred the evacuation, as no work negated their presence there.

The conversion of Bell Labs was the first visible gentrification of the waterfront, and parallels in the waterfront's use by homosexuals seeking out locations for sex. The abject and the gentrified is a co-existence.

⁹ Granted some longshoremen did live in the area, but not enough to dominate the area as a residential neighborhood.

¹⁰ As rent stabilized Artists' Lofts which remain highly prized today, this first conversion was for the middle-class, but further conversions quickly catered to the upper middle class.

¹¹ We shall see later how the transformation of pier 49 was influenced by this conversion of Bell Labs.

What becomes clear therefore is that there is no direct evidence of the *urban pioneer*¹² being of influence in the gentrification of the waterfront, as it should be noted the squatters in the gay fiction of the 1970s all come after the conversions of Bell Labs (1965-70), Tower Warehouse (1974) and Sheppard Warehouse (1974), (fig 6.2). The homosexual squatters existed amidst '*real-estate entrepreneurs operating at the "urban frontier" clear[ing] the ground for speculators and more reputable investors*' (Sites 2003: 81), not before them, further the scale¹³ of these conversions, excluded any piecemeal individual (squatters or individual investor) efforts at residential improvements on the waterfront. This corporate investment (conversions) was fuelled by the J-51¹⁴ and 421(a,b,g)¹⁵ tax incentives (which gave tax breaks for the conversion of these vacant industrial buildings), and the rising price of land and property in the city. Importantly for the waterfront- '*frontier" properties [as] empty buildings were often more valuable than occupied ones*' (Sites, 2003, p. 83), as the developer did not need to contend with New York's strict rental laws, legal challenges or pay compensation to remove tenants.

As mentioned above, beginning in 1965 properties began to be developed into residential units from their original uses as warehouses, factories and maritime hotels. This was in response to the availability of vacant and abandoned properties after the passing of the maritime industry and manufacturing. The conversions occurred at the same time¹⁶ as the fictional gay squatters of Tennessee Williams and Andrew Holleran's novels camped out in the abandoned warehouses:

¹² Those first non-corporate individuals venturing onto the verge and the margin (Hackworth, 2007).

¹³ For example, in the *Westbeth* complex there were 383 apartments and in *The Manhattan Refrigerator Co.* conversion there were 234 apartments.

¹⁴ 'The J-51 Program is administered by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to encourage the renovation of residential properties by granting partial tax exemption and abatement benefits' NYC Department of Finance.

¹⁵ 421a 'to promote construction [or conversion] of multi-family residential buildings with at least three dwelling units by providing a declining exemption on the new value created by the improvement' NYC Department of Finance.

421b 'to promote new one- and two-family housing construction [or conversion] by making home ownership more affordable to a larger segment of the population' NYC Department of Finance.

421g 'Created to encourage the conversion of non-residential buildings in Lower Manhattan to residential use' NYC Department of Finance.

¹⁶ It is important to note at the same time as and not before gentrification, precluding any notion of squatters as pioneers.

'...a small section of an abandoned warehouse near the Hudson docks. ...West Eleventh Street'¹⁷ and it was scantily partitioned off from the vastness in which it crouched by three wall of plywood which ascended about halfway to the ceiling' (Williams, 1975, p.11).

'They lived above the empty West Side Highway... They had a whole floor, which, years ago, had been filled with woman in bustles nervously spinning thread for knickers,'¹⁸ ... high up in the ruins' (Holleran, 1978, p. 83).

The conversions demonstrate a westward migration of the upper middle class from the central parts of Greenwich Village to its periphery, beginning in the late 1960s.¹⁹ There are also several low-grade tenement buildings and impressive nineteenth century Greek revivalist townhouses in the neighborhood,²⁰ and with the influx of new residents, the area was according to the New York Times, able to '*command luxury rents*' by 1982 (Oser, 1982). The conversions of factories- *adaptive re-use*- formed part of the basis for the proposed designation of this area of the Far West Village as a Landmarked Area, by the *New York City Landmark's Preservation Commission* in 2004, which legally provides protection to the preservation of the buildings in the designated area (fig 6.3), landmark status remains however undesigned, (with the exception of a small portion of Weehawken Street). *The Greenwich Village Society of Historic Preservation* argued in their submission and appeal for landmark status, that the industrial to residential *adaptive re-use* conversions were the first of its type in any city, and

¹⁷ West 11th Street was home of Joe Docks and his family in Budd Schulbergs' reportage in the 1950s.

¹⁸ One of the few mentions of women working on the waterfront in any text.

¹⁹ At the same time as the middle classes were seeking out new housing stock on the margins of the city, the homosexual was venturing to the edge for sex, to escape the police in the 1960s and for the availability of space for sex in the 1970s- the abject and the norm both seek out the edge for their own means, existing as opposites in the same region of space.

²⁰ As an example of housing stock: the 1830s townhouse at 335 West 11th Street, owned by the actress Julianne Moore was featured in *The World of Interiors* magazine (May 2006), under the cover heading '*Julianne Moore's Utopia*', which is an interesting comment considering the origins of the neighborhood. The house however was placed on the market in 2009 for \$11.9 million, a market increase of 340% on its original purchase price in 2003.

along with SoHo, which was developing at the same time, the location of the first *loft* type residences. The following table and map lists the chronology of these projects.²¹

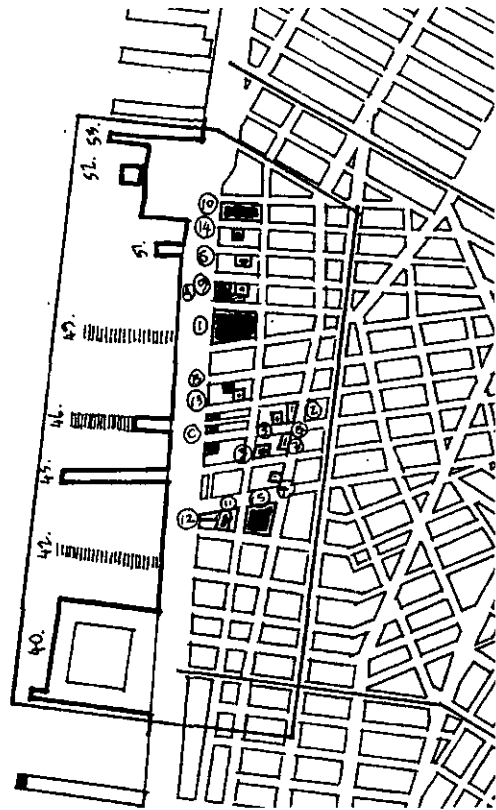


Fig: 6.2

1.	Bell Telephone Lab. (industrial)	455-465 West St. (whole block)	1965-1970 ²²
2.	Tower Warehouse	720+ 726- 736 Greenwich St.	1974
3.	Sheppard Warehouse	277 West 10 th Street	1974
4.	Warehouse	686- 690 Greenwich St.	1977
5.	Police Headquarters	135 Charles St.	1977 ²³
6.	Paper Mill	124- 132 Jane Street	1978
7.	Stable and Warehouse	704- 706 Greenwich St.	1978
8.	Stable and Warehouse	708- 712 Greenwich St.	1978
9.	Storehouse	380 West 12 th Street	1979
10.	The Manhattan Refrigeration Co.	97 Horatio St. (whole block)	1979
11.	Garage	166- 174 Christopher St.	1980
12.	Great Eastern Maritime Hotel	180 Christopher St.	1982
13.	Neo-classical Warehouse	155- 159 Perry St.	1984
14.	Romanesque Paint Factory	110- 112 Horatio St.	1984

²¹ This data has been assembled from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation: The Far West Village and Greenwich Village Waterfront: A Proposal for Preservation to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. September 2004.

²² The conversion was designed by Richard Meier, and renamed *Wesbeth*.

²³ The conversion of the police headquarters symbolically implies a break-down of order- a withdrawal of reformer/ enforcer as part of zone of abjection. However its domestication confirms another type of zone- the residential norm of the village.

15.	Federal Archive Building	150 Christopher St.	1987
a.	Superior Ink Apartments	469 West St.	2008
b.	Palazzo Chupi	West 11 th Street	2007
c.	Richard Meier Towers	173-176 Perry, 165 Charles Sts.	2001-2007



Fig 6.3: Proposed Far West Village/ Greenwich Village Waterfront Historic District.

A Bump

The gentrification road however is fraught with rocky upsets, most obviously in the abject elements discussed in earlier chapter, the homosexual use of the piers for sex and the LGBTQ youth using the waterfront as a refuge, which continued to exert the image (and actuality) of disorder on the edge. The waterfront was also negatively affected by gentrification in other neighborhoods in the city, most notably the Upper West Side. The Upper West Side was well on

its way to gentrification in 1969 when in the last week of June²⁴ (the year before *Wesbeth* was fully occupied on the waterfront), *New York Magazine* devoted its cover story to the 'Renaissance' of the Upper West Side (Pileggi, 1969). That gentrification uptown pushed the abject elements (junkies and homosexuals)²⁵ out of its neighborhood and downtown to the waterfront, where in the summer of 1971 a methadone clinic relocated from the newly gentrified Upper West Side, to a floating dock at pier 42 in Greenwich Village. This clinic brought 800-900 registered patients²⁶ through the village and to the waterfront everyday, exacerbating the existing village problem of 'hustlers, derelicts, winos and junkies who have taken over 8th Street, Sheridan Square, Washington Square and Christopher Street' (Weitz, 1972). After docking for a year the clinic was eventually relocated in September 1972 further downtown and again to a less gentrified area- Canal Street, thanks to the efforts of the local Greenwich Village political establishment whom included Edward I Koch. At the same time as the removal of the clinic were the deployment of new *neighborhood police teams* (Weitz, 1972), to crack down on the marginal activity in the Village (possibly further pushing the homosexual to the fringe of the neighborhood- the piers) and help restore order.

Late Gentrification

The trend of residentialization continued unabated and the age of *adaptive re-use*, has been supplanted by the era of the *starchitect*²⁷ designed luxury buildings on the waterfront. These include *Richard Meier's* three glass residential towers on West Street fronting the

²⁴ It is interesting that this article appears the same week as the Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village, as it acknowledges the presence of homosexuals on the streets of the Upper West Side, albeit as the abject, along with teenage muggers that are to be overcome in the process of gentrification.

²⁵ It was noted in Pileggi's article that homosexuals continued to parade on the Upper West Side despite gentrification, but implies their presence was about to decline, at the same time the homosexual population in the West Village rose, however it is unclear whether there was a correlation between the gay male population in the two neighborhoods.

²⁶ The use of the word '*patient*' was a means by the city to reduce the impact on the village, rather than *drug addict* or *junkie*, it was verbal cleansing of a social problem.

²⁷ A slang term for architects who have designed and built high profile buildings, have won the Pritzker Prize, or are media fodder.

waterfront at 173-176 Perry Street and 165 Charles Street,²⁸ *Polshek Partnership's* Standard Hotel (Andre Balaz) extending up and over the elevated Highline railroad to the waterfront at 848 Washington Street and 13th Street, *Robert A.M. Stern's* The Superior Ink Condominium Tower on the waterfront at 469 West Street and a row of townhouses on Bethune Street. Further North of the Far West Village above 14th Street but remaining on the waterfront there is another cluster extending the trend, *Frank Gehry's* IAC Headquarters on West Street at 555 West 18th Street, *Annabelle Selldorf's* 520 West 19th Street, directly adjacent to IAC and another at 200 Eleventh Avenue at 24th Street fronting the river, known for its ensuite 'sky garages',²⁹ *Shigeru Ban's* 524 West 19th Street adjacent to both Selldorf and IAC, *Jean Nouvel's* glittering tower on the waterfront at 100 Eleventh Avenue. In all creating a new waterfront on the West side of Manhattan that is fronted by unabashed luxury (figs 6.4).

²⁸ It is ironic that the first residential conversion was by Meier, before he became the designer of million dollar aspirational apartments in the late gentrification of the waterfront.

²⁹ In order to avoid the street, residents can drive their cars directly into an elevator taking them directly to their apartment, with out leaving their cars.



Fig 6.4: Richard Meier's three glass towers on the waterfront, pier 46 is to the fore (above)

Polshek Partnerships's Standard Hotel straddles the elevated Highline at 13th Street (left); and the cluster of Gehry's IAC Headquarters, Nouvel's tower to the rear and Selldorf's Condominium viewed from the Highline.

A Changing City

After the fiscal crisis of 1975 there was considerable change in the economic policy that drove New York, from a Keynesian model to one of *neoliberalism*. This new model shifted the city's concern from provision of services towards a corporatized management model that relies

on deregulation and privatization of the services normally provided by the city.³⁰ The steps taken to exit the fiscal crisis provided the steps to the transformation. In response to the crisis was transference of economic control from the city to the state³¹, when this failed to stabilize the city's finances the Emergency Financial Control Board was formed to control city repayments and install strict budgetary cuts. Eventually when both attempts failed to stem the crisis, the city asked for assistance from the federal government, which was met with resistance and the now famous Daily News headline FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD succinctly captured the mood (fig 6.5).

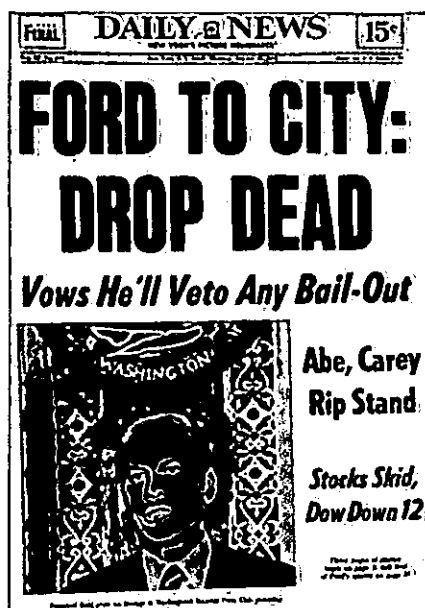


Fig 6.5 Headline of the New York Daily News, October 1975

Although funding was eventually provided by congress,³² Sites argues that little attention was paid to the causes of the fiscal problems and a theory of blame was created in order to further the new urban agenda of *neoliberalism* as expounded by the Chicago School.

³⁰ For additional extensive analysis of the neoliberal city see Vitale (2008), Hackworth (2007), Sites (2003) and Davis (1990)

³¹ Through a newly created Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC), made up of both private banking executives, and state officials- the city finances were put in part under the control of private corporate interests.

³² Who were afraid of a domino effect on the larger economy of New York *failed*.

'The strategy to resolve the New York fiscal crisis came to be under girded by the thesis that the city's budgetary burdens were driven by the excessive demands of poor people, municipal workers, racial minorities and community groups- and by the liberal politicians who supported them... Much less blame accrued to developers who overbuilt, financial institutions that encouraged and profited from irresponsible municipal borrowing, or planners who disregarded secular industrial decline, let alone the corporate decisions and federal decisions and federal policies that long favored suburbanization at the expense of older urban centers' (2003, p. 39).

With this bias towards the poor³³, the cutting of funds to transportation, social services, parks, policing, hospitals and schools- most relied upon by the poor- was more easily enforceable. Further Mayor Koch (1978- 1989) introduced tax-breaks for the creation of luxury real estate development, benefitting the waterfront neighborhood, in what Vitale calls a *'precursor to the Reagan "trickle-down" economics'* (2008, p. 102), this had the affect of pushing up land prices and further forcing out manufacturing. Throughout the 1980s this economic model was followed when the city vigorously sought out national and global investment in the provision of white-collar jobs, at the expense of manufacturing and goods transportation. The city became a center of global finance and Manhattan was modeled in an image that would continue to attract business.

Part of the method of attraction was in the promotion of livable neighborhoods and the amenities of parks, of which the restoration of Central Park under Koch was a priority despite cuts in the Department of Parks following the fiscal crisis. Extensive public-private partnerships were used in the refurbishment of the park, in both funding and management of the re-ordered

³³ In 2008, these arguments were again being used to explain the 'credit crunch' and the 'toxic debt' of defaulting mortgages portrayed as the fault of poor African American communities.

park and passing control of public owned parks to private corporations.³⁴ That is, Central Park was rescued from its own derelict, dangerous, marginal, *abject* state; much like the concept of rescue from the marginal, *abject* state in the creation of the Hudson River Park.

The transformation therefore, away from manufacturing and shipping, to an economy centered on finance; the growth of the real estate economy and the conversion of the Far West Village; coupled with the sanitization of the waterfront through the Hudson River Park Act, we can conclude the transformation of the waterfront occurred through a process of *neoliberalism*, within an over all transformation of New York City at the end of the twentieth century, which Sites (2003) calls *The Long Rebirth of New York*.³⁵

The waterfront then as a spatial region in the city too is reborn and its spatial progression plays as a physical emblem of this transformation. Just as the post-shipping colony held a mirror to the waterfront's decay, the new park holds a mirror to the city's resurgence.

Abject Suppression (Residential)

Following this development, the waterfront today exists at the bourgeois heteronormative peak of America's financial elite- *the establishment*- and is fronted by exclusive residential developments. The website *curbed.com* mockingly refers to West Eleventh Street³⁶ between Washington and West Street as '*Chupi-ville*' after the Julian Schnabel designed residential co-op building- *Palazzo Chupi*; and the waterfront stretch between Charles Street and West 11th Street as '*Meiers-ville*', after the three glass towers³⁷ he designed there along with the earlier conversion of *Bell Labs* into *Westbeth* apartments. The interiors of these towers (particularly

³⁴ This also occurred in Bryant Park, Washington Square Park and the new Highline Park.

³⁵ By which is meant the radical drop in crime, the increase in property value, inward migration, increase in wealth, employment and a resurgent national and international stature.

³⁶ The residential location of both *Mrs. Joe Docks* and Tennessee William's homosexual squatters in *Moise and the World of Reason* (1975).

³⁷ Example- Martha Stewart purchased an apartment there in 2004 for \$6.1 million, sold it in 2004 and in 2006 her daughter purchased 3 apartments (to combine into a triplex) in the newest Meier building for \$19 million, (NYT; Aug 13 2006); there is a marked contrast between the domestic goddess Stewart and the housewife *Mrs. Joe Docks*, who formerly lived on this block; Other owner/ occupiers in these buildings have included Calvin Klein and Nicole Kidman.

Ana Meier's³⁸) are blindingly white, immaculate and invariably as spaces cannot tolerate bodily functions, sexual deviance or death, 'where toothbrushes hide their scruffy heads' (Prisant 2008). Prisant in an article in *World of Interiors* accommodates the only possible abjection in the space- the 'unnervingly clinical bathroom'- with witty derision- 'a person could slip, die and be entombed simultaneously' in the space. This mitigates the bodily function and abject death to acceptable social banter, restoring the pristine. In 2008, the *abject* on the waterfront, is merely repartee.



Fig 6.6: The white interior of Ana Meier's Apartment: where the abject it appears is not possible; with a view out over pier 45, visible through the glass wall at left.

³⁸ Richard Meier's daughter.

Pier Gentrification

Parallel and due at least in part³⁹ to the residential change in the waterfront neighborhood beginning in the late 1960s, the piers began to transform (physically and conceptually) over time towards the river park in existence today. The piers evolution occurred in both an abject and civilizing manner, with both versions of space running concurrently to each other and both differing identities existing on the edge. This duality of identities compliments Kristeva's assertion that the '*fragile border*' -the edge- is the location and space where identities are questioned and become '*fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject*' (1982, p. 207). This fuzzy edge becomes increasingly apparent when the gender of the piers' spatial occupiers is examined (male, transgender, female). If we question society's assumptions of particular gender traits and labels we can see past the rhetoric of gentrification and come to new conclusions of spatial transformation on the waterfront.

As we have seen in earlier chapters, the male of the homosexual colony is the face of the abject waterfront and yet his gender identifies him as the urban norm, the male on the street. In affect he manages to play both the embodiment of abjection and the civilizing force on the waterfront-⁴⁰ for '*it is as if men are unable to resist the temptation to colonize, to appropriate, to measure, to control, to instrumentalize all that they survey*' (Groz, 2000, p. 219). This causes a contradiction within the zone of abjection on the waterfront; the *theater of recurrent crimes* does exist (crimes do occur there) so it is a marginal zone, but because the male domination of the waterfront is a social norm, patriarchal society remains intact on this particular edge. This therefore creates that *fuzzy* of which Kristeva speaks, the waterfront is controlled by the civilized norm (both municipal ownership and homosexual⁴¹ protagonists) but this norm uses

³⁹ The reasons for the development of a homosexual colony on the waterfront are discussed in an earlier chapter.

⁴⁰ Both sides of the coin- a fuzzy duality.

⁴¹ Aided by their ability to '*disguise their sexual orientation and group affiliations and "pass" as heterosexuals. They are not likely to be discriminated against economically unless they are discovered*' (Levine, 1979, p. 302), meanwhile the female can not hide herself (she being referred to as inherently abject) in public, and therefore holds no power.

(requires) the marginal abject symbolism of the edge to carry out those acts deemed outside the norm, namely homosexual sexual encounters, methadone clinics, prisons and garbage disposal. The question therefore in relation to the gentrification of the piers, is how did this duality of existence and requirement for a place of dirt on the edge transform into a place that suppresses and removes the abject, becoming a space that can foster the likes of the *Hudson River Park Mamas*? The female has no place traditionally on the Greenwich Village waterfront, which is why the presence of *The Mama* on the waterfront in 2009 points to a method to investigate its transformation post-shipping.

Through the re-shaping of the waterfront, a place becomes available for women to occupy, allowing what Groz notes as the '*project ahead*' for women in finding space in the city- '*return women to those places from which they have been dis- or re-placed or expelled... to experiment with and produce the possibility of occupying, dwelling, or living in new spaces*' (2000, p. 221). This view, based in gender terms, offers an alternate to the view of gentrification as a purely residential land-grab. The experiment in this case is making a park (that is safe to use) on the defunct piers and the production is a re-ordering of the symbolism of the margin (exclusion to inclusion).

As I discussed in earlier chapters, the change in control of the waterfront opened up access to the piers. The homosexuals moved in to occupy the pier sheds for sexual encounters, and as the decade of the 1970s passed and the pier sheds collapsed, the open decks began to be used for other recreation. The use of these open decks by the daytime recreational colonists on the waterfront was in marked contrast to the nighttime sexual colony of *The Clone*. Shelley Secombe's period photographs capture these early frontier women on the piers in the 1970s, however these intrepid pioneers were not of scale or movement to undermine the pier's concept as a *zone of abjection* in those early days, but did highlight the day/ night divide of activity. The women come to be the embodiment of the orthogonal daytime norm that is navigable, but would

get lost in the *zone of abjection* of the night, where time, space, decency and direction are twisted and manipulated by the dark, '*because different rules apply when its After Hours*' (Scorsese, 1985).⁴² The colony of the *Mamas* was very much the daytime (figs 6.2). I intentionally use both the phrase *frontier women* and *pioneers* here, because they highlight Laura Mulvey's essay *Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity* (1992), particularly her critique of American western film. According to Mulvey the female is used as a representational tool to show the settlement and stabilizing of the American west- or in other terms the *gentrifier* of the Wild West:

'Transform the terrain of adventure and discovery into a land in which settlement, and consequently the sphere of the feminine, can be established... the feminine acquires another dimension of meaning in binary opposition to the nomadism of the indigenous people' (1992, p. 56)

On the waterfront she too is in binary opposition to the indigenous people, the former male dominated docks (the longshoreman as the cowboy myth) and the sexually active male homosexuals, and so her presence does provide a point of reference for gentrification, she becomes the symbolic representation of civilization. However, she is also in binary opposition to both the City and the developers, which make up the paternal social norm. The female's presence therefore is at once the symbolic clean alternative to the abject dirt and the abject herself as the female asserting herself in space.⁴³ For ease of identification and the inherent symbolism of the binary opposite, I will here examine the conversion of the waterfront into a space for recreation (and gentrification), by the use of the female as spatial occupier.⁴⁴

⁴² The movie *After Hours*. (Scorsese dir. 1985) centred on the bizarre exploits of an uptown office worker when he goes downtown after dark, and everything flouts convention.

⁴³ For Kristeva the female cannot escape the abject and she uses the female body as the litmus in discussions of abjection (1982).

⁴⁴ She is not the longshoreman or the homosexual, both of whom have dominated the waterfront at varying times, but she is present and therefore her attendance on the waterfront tells a particular story.

There is an historical precedent of non-commercial leisure piers on the waterfront, which predate the later colonizing. The clone and the early other users represent an organic or accidental pursuit of a pleasure pier, but earlier private and City initiatives produced waterfronts for recreation. There was a water-borne theater, on the Hudson River, between Spring and Charlton Streets in the early 19th Century and later the Seaman's Church sought berths for floating chapels. Bellevue Hospital ran a barge docked in the East River, for patients to take in the air. Also most notably, as they are again seeing resurgence, were the floating swimming pools of the 19th Century, two were docked near the Battery on the West Side (Buttenweiser, 1999, pp. 108-111). A more formal movement of providing leisure piers was created through the *Settlement House Movement*⁴⁵ to help improve the physical and moral health of the poorer members of the city's populace in the early Twentieth Century, with the building of purpose built piers for recreational use. Pier 43 on the Village waterfront was once such a pier. The waterfront therefore although a zone on the margin did exist in other forms other than the industrial, although still catering to the sick and the poor, whom were also socially marginal (fig 6.6.).



Fig 6.6: Pier 43 at the foot of Christopher Street was a recreation pier in the early Twentieth Century. Another use of the water at the turn of the century- a hospital barge on the East River.

⁴⁵ In the United States the Settlement House Movement was largely begun and organized by women.

Manhattan also had pockets of non-industrial activity on its waterfront, most obviously in Battery Park, Riverside Park on the Upper West Side and after the end of shipping, East River Park.

Battery Park at the very southern tip of the island is according to the Battery Conservancy's⁴⁶ website, '*one of the oldest public open spaces in continuous use in New York City*'. It has been used since the 17th Century as a waterfront promenade and a public arena for many cultural celebrations. Its current area and edge profile was created from landfill in the 19th Century and today it operates as a public park. Interestingly, for it demonstrates the type of waterfront *Westway* would have created, The Battery has two tunnels for traffic underneath its landscaping- the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and the Battery Park Underpass.

Riverside Park on the Upper West Side was originally conceptually designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the late 19th Century as a means to gentrify the area and mitigate the affects of rail yards and waterfront industrial activity. Along with the park Olmsted designed Riverside Drive a residential street that led to the building of many luxury high-rise apartment buildings. The park however, did not reach as far as the river edge and access to the waterfront was denied by way of rail tracks along the Western shore. In 1916, the *Women's League for the Protection of Riverside Park* took control of the southern end of the park and converted it into a bird sanctuary. The League also took a political stance and protested to defend the park from the encroachment of the rail yards further into the park. The New York Times on January 3rd 1918 noted the following, '*the habit appears to have grown [Mrs. Bryan, President of the League] thought, to push women and children into the background and to consider their needs as less important than the needs of business*', (emphasis added) a comment that mirrors (Groz, 2000) and highlights the marginality of women in public space. Through the League however, women had a voice on Upper West Side waterfront, unlike other locations in the city; this was the

⁴⁶ The not-for-profit educational corporation, who in partnership with the City and State runs the park.

exception that proved the rule in whom had the power over the waterfront.⁴⁷ Regardless of the activity of the League, the park had become run down by the 1930's when Robert Moses planned the West Side Improvement plan in 1934 to build a new arterial highway through the park (connecting with the elevated Miller Highway downtown), while building over the rail tracks to expand the park's area. Robert Caro in his opus on Moses describes the conditions of the park prior to the improvement works as follows:

'The wasteland was named Riverside Park, but the "park" was nothing but a vast low-lying mass of dirt and mud.⁴⁸ Running through its length was the four-track bed of the New York Central... Unpainted, rusting, jagged wire fences along the tracks barred the city from its waterfront... At Seventy-ninth and Ninety-sixth streets, untreated garbage mounded toward the sky; the Sanitation Department used those areas as dumping grounds... Other spots held human refuse: derelicts who had built tar-paper shanty towns considered so dangerous that the police stayed away from them' (Caro, 1975, pp. 65-66).

This blighted landscape- a zone of abjection- provided means by which gentrification, even as a form of infrastructural insertion was a desirable outcome for the waterfront. Moses used his improvement plans for the park and new highway as an all encompassing plan to reconfigure the waterfront.⁴⁹ The impetus for the park's improvement in the 1930s provided the same rationale for the later gentrification of the Greenwich Village piers, that is '*to alleviate the blighted, unhealthy, unsanitary and dangerous conditions that characterize much of the area*' (Hudson River Park Act, 1998, p. 1) and provide access for the arterial Westside Highway, Route 9A.

⁴⁷ Although I am using the presence of the female on the Greenwich Village waterfront to indicate change, they are not organized as a distinct women's group with an agenda to affect change, but they do benefit from change nonetheless.

⁴⁸ To justify change and reform.

⁴⁹ Much like Central Park in the interior of Manhattan, Riverside Park deteriorated in the 1970s and 80s, before being refurbished and cleaned up in the 1990s through the cooperation of private investment and City and State funds

Moses also left his imprint on the waterfront of the East River with the park he built during the construction of the FDR Drive, another arterial road, this time along the Eastside. Moses extended the bulkhead to create extra space and through condemnation and eminent domain, removed the abject waterfront elements of slaughterhouses, glass factories, garbage transfer stations, power stations and railway yards.⁵⁰ This project again suppressed the blighted waterfront under the cleanliness of a designed landscaped. The East River Park covers an area of 57.46 acres and includes playgrounds, playing fields, and amphitheater, bicycle paths, children's water play areas and gardens. It is this broad park area disconnected to the waterfront's maritime activity and separated from the local residential neighborhoods by traffic, that Jacob's criticizes in 1962, relating it to her theories of border regions and the vacuum they create (1962, p. 268).

Outside of these earlier evocations of a non-industrial waterfront, there are inklings of an identity shift on the waterfront from working to recreation beginning in the late 1950s immediately after the domination of the shipping industry moves to New Jersey in 1956 (although piecemeal shipments continue on the Village piers for several more years). The New York Times ran an article in 1959, calling the edge of Pier 52 beside the Sanitation Department's salt storage dump, '*the Village lido*' (fig 6.7).



Fig. 6.7

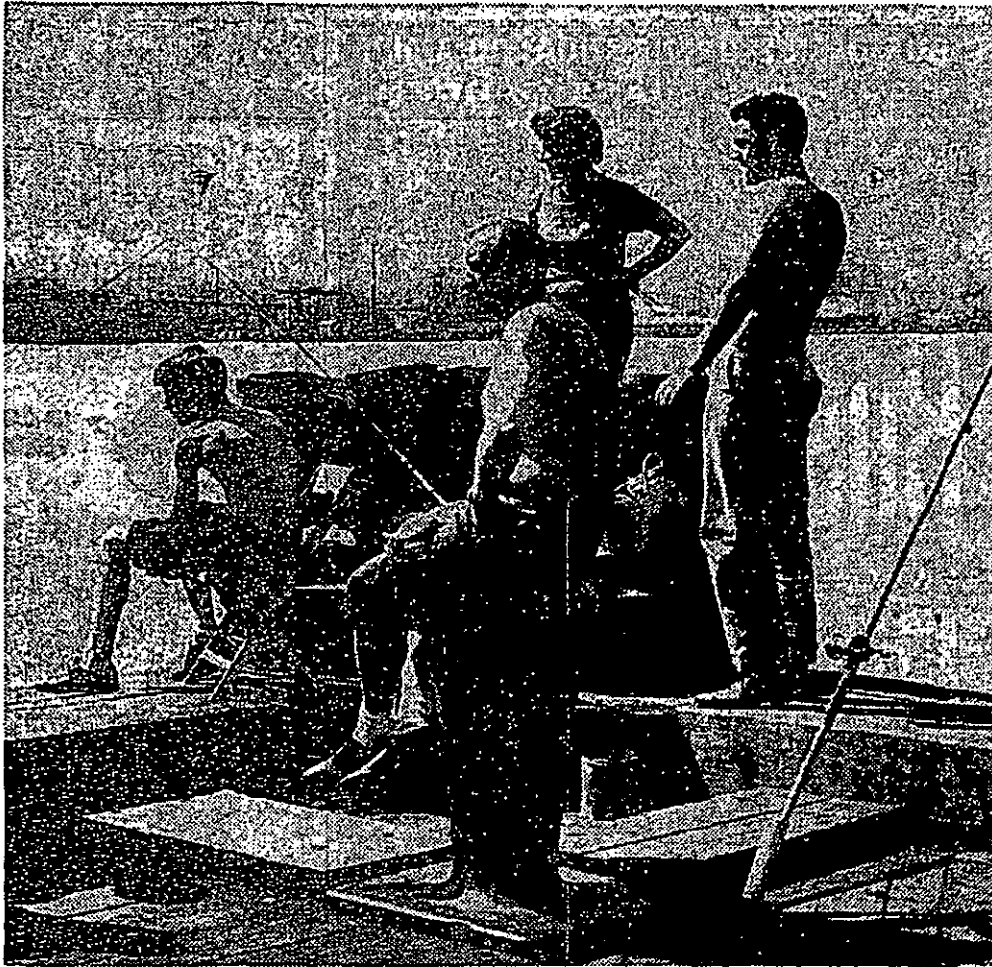
⁵⁰ The shipping industry had departed the Eastside much earlier than the Hudson River, mostly due to the dominance of the Hudson River, but also the Eastside piers serviced ships connecting to the States north of New York and Canada, and this transport route switched almost exclusively to trucking in the early 20th Century.

The article goes on to tell of young boys swimming, men fishing for eels from the pier edge, noting:

'About fifty people were on the pier yesterday. The main activity appeared to be inactivity while listening to a broadcast of the ball game. The pier is roughly timbered, so the regulars brought cushions along. Refreshments were available from a man with a little cart' (James, 1959).⁵¹

In the accompanying photograph, we see a woman in a summer dress surveying the scene, her handbag at her feet. Her attire and gender sets her apart from the shirtless men in the image, and she fits the propriety standards for women of the period. However, she does look comfortable in the scene and her presence demonstrates the inclusivity of the pier in 1959, at least by day.

⁵¹ Again in the mid 1970s, men with carts selling refreshments catered to the night-time crowd of homosexuals.



FUN IN THE SUN—MANHATTAN STYLE: Yesterday was just about a perfect time to take advantage of the sunbathing and swimming facilities offered at the Department of Sanitation's Pier 52 on Hudson River between Gansevoort and Little Twelfth Streets. The New York Times

Fig: 6.8 The Lido on Pier 52

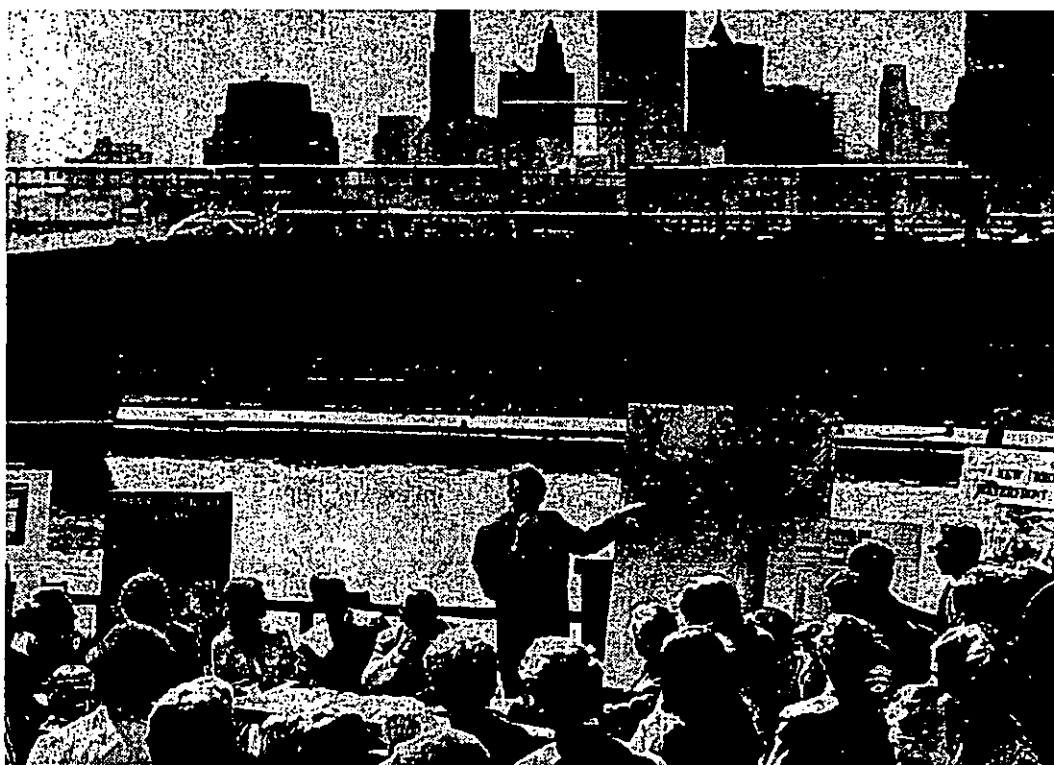
Jane Jacob's in 1962 mentions this same Pier 52:

'Near where I live is an old open dock, the only one for miles, next to a huge Department of Sanitation incinerator and scow anchorage. The dock is used for eel fishing, sunbathing, kite flying, car tinkering, picnicking, bicycle riding, ice-cream and hot-dog vending, waving at passing boats, and general kibitzing' (1962, p. 268).

Jacobs' uses this pier as a means to describe a preferred waterfront border condition that allows interactions between recreation and shipping, because she finds *'the usual form of rescue for a decayed waterfront vacuum is to replace it with a park,'*⁵² *which in turn becomes a border element... and this moves the vacuum effect inland'* (p. 268).⁵³ By the mid 1960s however, a few years after her book was published, the waterfront and the neighborhood of the Far West Village had become such a border region and the neighborhood was suffering from the vacuum the border caused. The reduction (to complete removal) of shipping and the migration of the longshoremen and their families out of the neighborhood reduced the population of the area, leaving it quiet and devoid of society. We can assume recreational activity remained on Pier 52 through out the 1960s, as its structure and accessibility did not change, but by 1966 the adjacent piers had become vacant shells and the only maritime activity was that of scrap barges temporarily docking along the Village waterfront. As discussed in chapter The Clone, the trucks parked by the waterfront had become a recognizable haven for homosexual activity by 1965 continuing in the 1970s.

⁵² Jacob's is referring to East River Park here, as a means to critique Robert Moses' style of park development.

⁵³ For Jacob's the lack of activity along a border causes a vacuum in the neighboring area.



TELLS OF FESTIVAL PLANS: Mayor Lindsay, at conference on Pier 45, uses map to indicate the piers to be used The New York Times (by Neal Beenz)

City Plans to Use Piers as a Cultural Playground

Fig 6.9: From the New York Times: September 3, 1970: the photograph is taken looking South, with the bow of the John W. Brown school ship visible at pier 42 to the left; behind that is pier 40, and the downtown skyline visible at the rear.

In the early 1970s the same forces that curtailed the expansion of the homosexual colony from the trucks out onto the piers, also prevented other individuals (non-homosexuals, mothers)⁵⁴ from accessing the piers, as the International Longshoremen's Association⁵⁵ retained control of the vacant piers. The union employed night watchmen to prevent illegal egress on to the piers. This control was challenged by the Mayor's plan of 1970,⁵⁶ as detailed in the New York Times, to *'transform part of New York's dowdy old waterfront temporarily into a cultural*

⁵⁴ Unlike today with the blurring of the components of a 'traditional' family, in the 1970s the easiest method of distinction of non-homosexuals on the waterfront is through the use of the female, (particularly the mother). She can be identified most easily in photographs and her gender is visible, unlike the male who may not physically in photographs appear homosexual.

⁵⁵ The ILA retained a union presence on the piers in the vain hope of re-igniting the shipping industry on the West side of Manhattan. However, in light of the links between the ILA and organized crime it is possible to at least imagine that the piers provided a secluded location from which to conduct criminal activity.

⁵⁶ The City owned the piers, usually renting them out to shipping companies, however the unions who were in control of all labor and movement of goods on the waterfront effectively controlled the whole affair.

and recreational playground' in a program to run from September 12, 1970 until January 4, 1971, with the *'construction of a waterside park, three movie theaters, for family, classic and experimental films, art exhibitions, an Italian theatrical spectacular, an ethnic festival, an antiques show, concerts and various waterfront events'* (Gent, 1970) (fig 6.9). The piers to be included were piers 42, 45 and to the North pier 57, 62 and 86. However the plan was disrupted by the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) who organized against establishing the pier as anything other than shipping and picketed the waterfront. This prevented access to the piers for the festival to be built, forcing an abandonment of the festival on the waterfront. The festival was later relocated to Central Park. This event highlighted the continued power of the unions over the waterfront, who despite the end of the shipping industry were determined to cling to the power of place. The event also demonstrated the direction the City was willing to take on the Greenwich Village waterfront to move the use of that space away from industry.⁵⁷ Thus the same year as *Westbeth* opened to new residents. The City was also interested in- *'the restructuring of urban space for a wealthier clientele'*- gentrification of the waterfront. By 1970 both City and private capital was invested in re-ordering the waterfront of Greenwich Village. This re-ordering we must remember ran parallel to the development of the abject colony of the Clone.

Despite the longshoremen induced set back in 1970 in creating a waterfront for recreation, the plan did indicate the city's intention to re-shape the waterfront; a vision that would stabilize with the collapse in 1973 of the elevated Miller Highway and the subsequent *Westway* plan of 1974. The *Westway* plan's bright light was in the creation of a vast park along the West side waterfront and the submerging of the cumbersome arterial highway, which was never completed but did dramatically inform the evolution of the piers (for detail of this project see The Clone chapter).

⁵⁷ This change is most noticeable in comparison to the 1963 Ebasco Plan, which promoted industry on the piers.

City Seeks to Convert 3 Piers Into 'Village' Recreation Area

Fig. 6.10 Headline in the New York Times, 1975

In 1975 there was another unrealized city plan for the waterfront, this time via the Department of Ports and Terminals, for the construction of a marina, tennis courts and recreational areas on piers 48, 49 and 51 (Ranzal, 1975). This plan by a department whose role was fostering marine based industrial activity marked a distinctive departure for the waterfront (fig 6.10). The *Department of Ports and Terminals* had abandoned shipping on the Village piers. Although the department's support of the *Westway* project, which would have eventually removed these piers, made it, easier no doubt for them to acknowledge the death of the maritime industry.

It is unclear exactly when the International Longshoremen's Association relinquished their control of the waterfront and withdrew their supervision of the vacant piers. Although it most likely precipitated both the 1973 collapse of the Miller Highway and the *Westway* plan, the 1973 burning down of pier 50 (public attention drawn to piers) and possibly through influence on the union from the union friendly Democrat controlled city government. The union had managed to secure the piers since the end of the shipping industry and although the City continued to own the piers, it had conveniently left the retention of order on the waterfront to the ILA.⁵⁸ The City did not fill the void after the ILA's departure and the piers essentially became a free-for-all.

⁵⁸ There is a certain irony in using the ILA to retain order considering its heavy involvement in organized crime and the degrading of longshoremen during the years when shipping existed on the waterfront.

The piers were abandoned by the city through a process of disinvestment. Neither the political will nor the financial resources were available for the piers upkeep after New York's fiscal crisis of 1975, particularly in light of their proposed demolition and replacement as part of the federally funded *Westway* plan, leading to their eventual collapse.⁵⁹ Also, conveniently for the City, once the piers had begun to collapse into the river, the jurisdiction over their remains transferred to the Army Corp of Engineers, through the *New York Harbor Collection and Removal of Drift Project*, which was authorized by Congress in the *Water Resources Development Act* of 1974.

'The project provides for removing abandoned piers, wharves, derelict vessels and debris, and also for repairing in-use deteriorated shore structures throughout the Port of New York'.

'The project purpose is to reduce hazards and damages to navigation by removing potential sources of drift. Cost sharing for removal work is two-thirds Federal and one third non-Federal: repair work is 100% Non-Federal' US Army Corps of Engineers (n.d.).

This Federal intervention on the waterfront during the 1970s and 80s aided the City's ability to ignore the upkeep of the piers and abandon its municipal responsibilities. However, abandonment was not unique to the Greenwich Village waterfront, as during this period whole swaths of New York experienced the trauma of abandonment, arson and decay, particularly in the neighborhoods of the Bronx, Brooklyn, the East Village and the Lower East Side. All the

⁵⁹ Without municipal supervision (or repair) the piers were vandalized and burned out through arson attacks. The affects of the weather, through freeze-thaw action and the power of the tidal Hudson River all took their toll on the piers structure.

while the city was gripped by recession, fiscal crisis and a sense that it was on the verge of collapse. Marshall Berman⁶⁰ remembers the following:

'fires... they burst out mainly in poor minority neighborhoods all over town...

For years, midnight fires ate up not only buildings but whole blocks, often block after block. Then we found out that even while sections of the city were burning down, most massively in the South Bronx, their firehouses were being closed and the size of their crews was being reduced- on the grounds they were losing population' (2007, pp. 14-15).⁶¹

There is a paradox here that again conflates that strange condition of the waterfront as *edge condition*. The City abandons the piers to arson and decay and yet continues to attempt to recreate a new waterfront through *Westway* and various other plans to provide recreational facilities on the piers. The City was also providing tax incentives for residential development in the neighborhood of the Far West Village and buildings lining the waterfront, yet ignoring the piers themselves as they slipped into the river. Its as if there is an understanding of the parallels between the abject and the gentrified; to have gentrification there must be abjection to rebel against.

⁶⁰ Distinguished Professor of Political Science at City College of New York.

⁶¹ In the far West Village the police station at 135 Charles Street was closed owing in many ways to the same reason, the population of longshoremen and sailors had reduced the population of the area.



Fig: 6.11 Taking in the air on Pier 49 in 1977, (looking East) the daytime colony; The large building to the left is Westbeth the converted Bell Labs; The collapsed ruin to the rear is Pier 50, and the barges are for the removal of the debris.

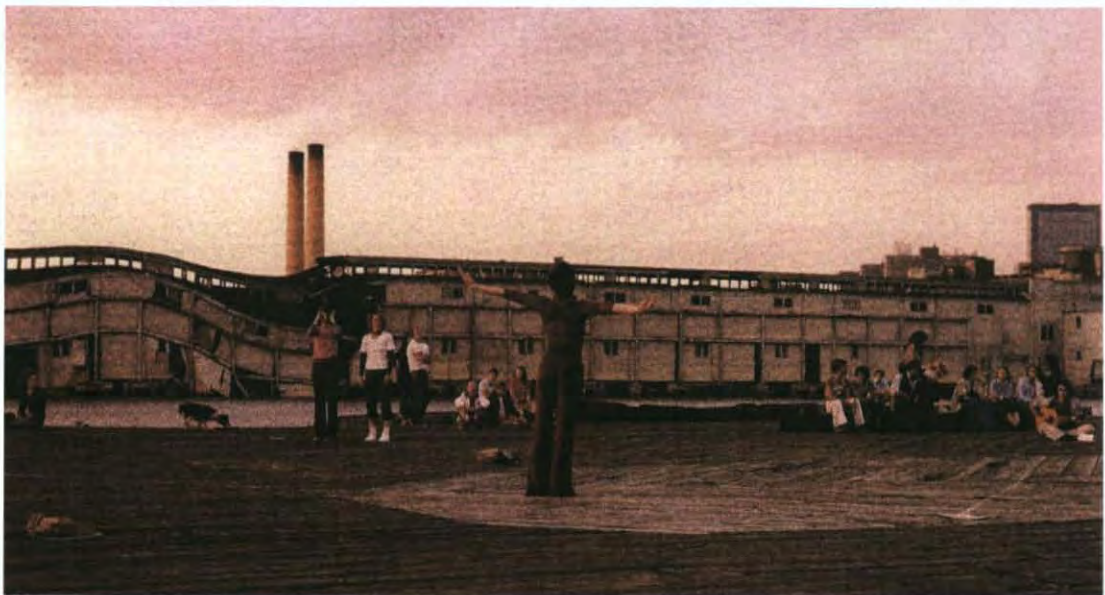


Fig: 6.12 An impromptu performance on Pier 49 later in 1977, (looking North); the daytime colony concentrate on the naked pier decks; Pier 50 has been removed completely between the previous photograph and this one; the pier visible in its undulating state is Pier 51, with the chimneys of the Sanitation Department's incinerator behind on Gansevoort Peninsula.

The condition of the piers in the 1970s provided locations for both sexual and social interactions; but there was one pier in particular that fostered the colony of the Mama independent of the homosexual and events that helped shape the recreational waterfront in the post-shipping era; Pier 49 (fig 6.12 above). The pier shed on pier 49 burned down and was cleared by contract through the Army Corp of Engineers in 1975, exposing the pier and leaving a naked pier deck; during the day the pier began to be used by local residents and workers as a makeshift public open space for bathing, jogging, exercise etc.; its location opposite the *Westbeth* Apartment complex with 383 units (which had been converted from the *Bell Labs* in 1965), was central to the use of pier 49 as recreation as it provided a defacto *park* directly at the door of these apartments. The other piers with their sheds intact remain the preserve of the *Clone*. The abandoned elevated Miller Highway after its partial collapse and closure in 1973 became an additional location for recreation and was used along the Village until its total collapse and removal in 1982 (fig 6.13).



Fig 6.13: (Top Left) a jogger in the snow on pier 49 (1977), the abandoned elevated Miller Highway is visible on the waterfront; In the Top Right image, at the foot of pier 49 in 1983, the highway has been demolished; (Bottom Image) of approximately the same section of waterfront today, Robert A. M. Stern's Superior Ink Apartment Complex is now in the location of the two chimneys in the first image; *Westbeth* (the old Bell Labs) is just visible to the right; pier 51, is to the bottom left of image.

On July 4th, 1976 the tall ships in Operation Sail for the nation's Bicentennial⁶² celebrations, proved a pivotal date (Buttenweiser 1999 [1987]) in the waterfront as crowds amassed on the West side waterfront to view the spectacle and drawing attention to the available recreation space developing there (fig 6.14).

⁶² Shilts (1987), places this date at the epicentre of the beginning of Aids in New York.



Fig 6.14: Operation Sail, July 4, 1976 to celebrate the Nation's Bicentennial; the waterfront possibilities are witnessed by the city's residents, here gathering to watch the Tall Ships at pier 49 (the police prevented access onto the pier for fear of collapse under the weight of a crowd); pier 48 as a skeletal ruin is visible to the left.

The venturing of women out into spaces of urban dereliction in the 1970s was a trend and the waterfront was a part of this spatial re-appropriation. Although the use of the defunct waterfront was not accompanied by a political manifesto, it did demonstrate citizen activity and use of public space in spite of the cut backs the fiscal crisis of 1975 wrought upon parks, public infrastructure (subway and bus), social services and the police force. All of which Vitale contends, lead by the late 1970s- 1980s to the deterioration of the city's parks to a level that *'people no longer felt safe in public spaces'* (Vitale, 2008, p. 127). This condition was concentrated in Manhattan's interior parks, Washington Square Park, Tompkins Square Park, Central Park, Bryant Park and Madison Square Park, which existed in a more explicit state of abjection than even the waterfront. They were rife with crime, drug addicts and homeless

populations, which the waterfront of Greenwich Village escaped, despite the abjection of homosexual sex, a floating prison and the (minor amount of) homeless 'Legendary Children'. The waterfront, except at night was largely free of crime and drug addiction (once the floating methadone clinic was removed in 1972) and suffered more from social abjection and reputation than the dangers plaguing other city parks. The Greenwich Village waterfront over the 70s and 80s, even in its derelict state benefited from the gentrification and residentialization of the neighboring streets, allowing this section of waterfront escape the homeless encampments that took hold on the downtown waterfront near the Brooklyn Bridge, where a large population built ram shackle houses under the elevated FDR Drive.

In defense to the deterioration and lack of sanctioned public space, women in New York took active positions on creating new space out of gaps in the city.⁶³ In 1971, on New Year's Eve, seventy-five women took over an abandoned building owned by the City on Fifth Street, in the East Village. Their aim was to create a space that was not being provided by the city- a refuge for women, drug rehabilitation, health care and childcare. Weisman notes, *'the Fifth Street Women clearly understood that the appropriation of space is a political act, that access to space is fundamentally related to social status and power, and that changing the allocation of space is inherently related to changing society'* (1994, p. 1). Women never took over space in a consorted effort on the waterfront, but their presence does mark the changing waterfront and early on, that act of women in an unsanctioned public space was a form of abjection.

In 1983, a women's peace camp existed for two weeks in Bryant Park. Fifty women took part to demonstrate against nuclear proliferation. But their presence there was also symbolic as an act of taking back public space from the dangers of the drug addled Bryant Park, which had made public space particularly dangerous for women, whom were most at risk of

⁶³ This process stemmed out of the 1960s feminist movement, but the actions often was not intended as a political act but one of necessity, but not forgetting that ultimately all acts are political.

muggings and assault.⁶⁴ Downtown derelict sites were also put to use by Liz Christy an artist and activist, who in 1973 formed the group *Guerrilla Gardeners* as a mixed group of individuals with the unifying desire to develop and improve green open space in the city. They developed *seed bombs*,⁶⁵ as a tactic to capture space, naturalize it with planting and bring it in from vacancy as a useable garden space. The *bombing* of a derelict site on the corner of Houston and Bowery in late 1972/ early 1973 was the beginnings of the community garden that would develop on that site. In December 1973 the Guerrillas lobbied the City to gain recognition of their efforts and to protect it by agreeing a lease for the site. On April 23rd 1974, the City's Office of Housing Preservation and Development approved the site for rental to the Group, under the name *Bowery Houston Community Farm and Garden*. The lease was \$1 a month. According to Donald Loggins, the historian for the park, the overwhelmingly positive reaction to this decision by the City, spawned many more people to take up the cause and develop their own neighborhood parks. The Guerilla Gardeners expanded from there as both a physical help to other gardeners, seeds, advice etc, but also as an advocacy group for the development of green open spaces in the city. Although the waterfront was not *seed bombed*, the same principals of commandeering city space for the good of the community were evident in the use of the waterfront for social and cultural events (fig 6.12).

Even as parts of the city began to be liberated from their blight by local communities in defiance of the economic realities of the 1970s, New York entered a phase of urban crisis. Sites notes, 'by 1975, when the financial pressures on local government had become serious enough in New York to raise the specter of municipal default, the definition of urban crisis throughout the country had come to mean urban fiscal crisis' (2003, p. 37). The 1975 fiscal crisis in New York led to the restructuring of the city's governance and financial means of operation, indelibly leaving a profound mark on the City. However, its affects on the waterfront of

⁶⁴ See Weisman (1994) for additional information and data on the dangers facing women in public space.

⁶⁵ A balloon, condom or Christmas bauble was filled with clay, seeds and water and hurled over fences into sites, breaking on impact and spreading seed and its means to grow in the new location.

Greenwich Village were mitigated by the presence of the over-reaching *Westway* plan, which predated and existed after the fiscal crisis. *Westway* in many ways isolated the waterfront from further decline and disinvestment,⁶⁶ as the process of residential gentrification in the neighborhood continued throughout the crisis, knowing Federal funds were to be spent on the eventual park *Westway* promised. Isolating the area from City and State cuts and financial troubles, the waterfront neighborhood was not seen as a risky investment.

The waterfront continued to deteriorate over the 1970s and the sheds had all disappeared by the mid 1980s, resulting initially in an abundance of open deck space for recreation, however the condition of pier 49 eventually made it no longer safe to venture onto and the section connecting it to the bulkhead collapsed, causing the pier deck to become an island disconnected from the bulkhead. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, pier 45 became the dominant recreation pier and was used by the all the waterfront colonies, although as evidenced in this photograph (fig 6.15), there is still a largely white male homosexual population.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Other than as mentioned earlier the reluctance of the city to spend money retaining the piers in good condition.

⁶⁷ The photograph (fig) was taken by a friend of the author in 1993, who recalls the piers as being predominantly used by gay men for sunbathing in the Summer months.



Fig. 6.15: The recreation on pier 45 early 1990s

In the post-*Westway* period (after 1985) after the project had been defeated and withdrawn, the city as a whole dallied on the brink of social breakdown. A crime and homelessness problem was creating a municipal crisis and '*people no longer felt safe in public spaces*' (Vitale, 2008, p. 127). Tolerance of these problems reached a climax and the traditionally dominant New York '*urban liberals were unable to deal with the problems of disorder facing the city*' (2008, p. 185). Leading to the domination in 1993 of the *quality-of-life*⁶⁸ concept for saving the city; the spatial sanitation of the city's public space was central to this and was on both community and legislative agendas; as was a corporatization of the city and a trust in free-market economics in order to achieve salvation for the city. Sites (2003) and Hackworth (2007) both refer to this new ideologue age as *neoliberal urbanism*- essentially defining it as '*governance at the municipal level is now largely defined by the ability of formal*

⁶⁸ *Quality-of-Life* is a political rhetoric that has changed over time, which has come to dominate in neo-conservative circles since 1993, it concentrates on punitive control to restore social order. See Section 5.4.3 The Legendary Children for more detail.

government to assist, collaborate with, or function like the corporate community', where regulatory power and *'redistributive impulses in the area of social services and housing'* have been weakened (Hackworth 2007:10). New York had become a neoliberal city and its spatial configuration was affected by this economic and political shift.

The recognition that a waterfront park would have economic advantages for both tourism and business was part of the Hudson River Park Act of 1998, *'boost tourism and stimulate the economy'* (HRP Act 1998: Sec. 2 (a)), in addition to the sanitizing elements of the plan⁶⁹; this connects public space with economic investment in the 1990s, and places the production of the Hudson River Park within the neoliberal city. However, this economic connection to space goes back to at least the fiscal crisis of 1975 in New York City, where the steps taken to avert the city's economic collapse informed the further spatial crisis⁷⁰ of the 1980s.



Fig 6.16: Inside pier 51 in 1981- men at play (left image); on pier 51 today- children at play (right image).

⁶⁹ The Hudson River Park Act includes improving the *'quality of life'* of residents, 1998.

⁷⁰ The lack of safety on the street or in public spaces and parks, crime, drugs, dirt, garbage and homelessness.

The Esplanade

The construction of a new vent shaft for the PATH train tunnel at the foot of Morton Street delivered a new landscaped area on the waterfront in 1991. And in 1994 the Hudson River Park Conservancy opened an interim bike path and esplanade on the Greenwich Village waterfront, with access to pier 45 and 46. Eventually with the passing of the Hudson River Park Act in 1998, (explained below in *Reformer* section) a full waterfront recreation transformation was secured and after several years of construction the Hudson River Park opened in 2003 incorporating a linear park along the bulkhead and reconstruction of piers 45, 46 and 51 exclusively for recreational and park uses (figs 6.17.).

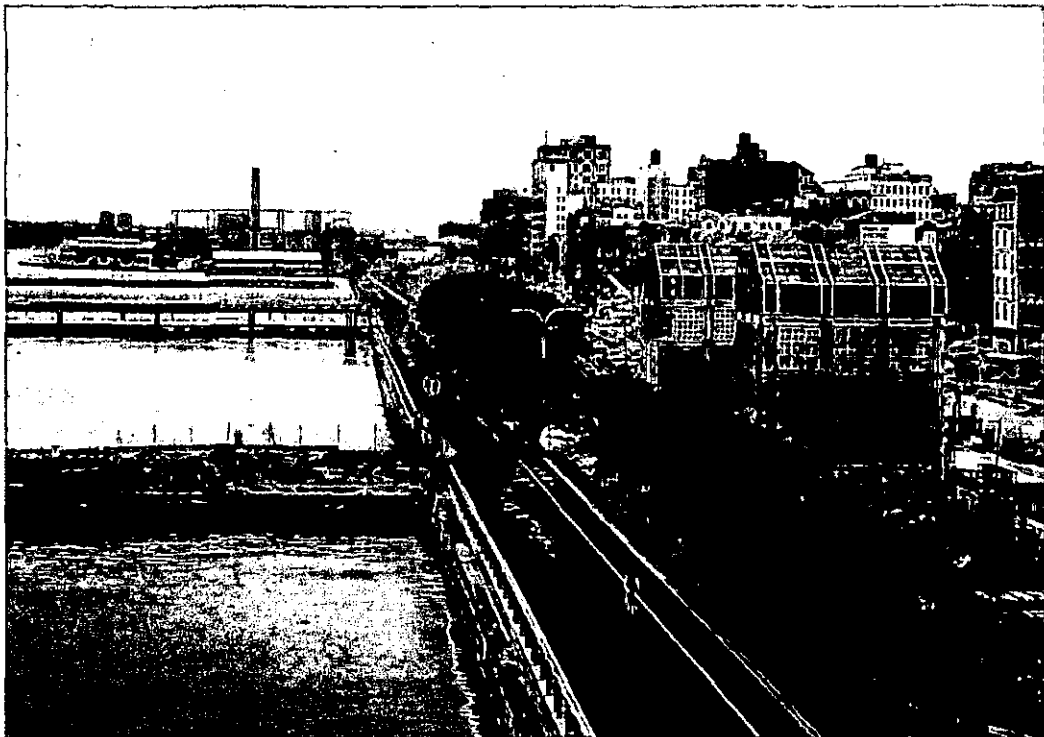


Fig 6.17: An overview looking North along the esplanade in 1994, to the left is the ruin of pier 42, above is pier 45, 46, the ruin of pier 49 (disconnected from the land), beyond are the chimneys of the Sanitation Department incinerator on Gansevoort Peninsula and the FDNY fireboat at pier 53; to the right center of image, are the vents for the PATH train and landscaping of 1990-1991.

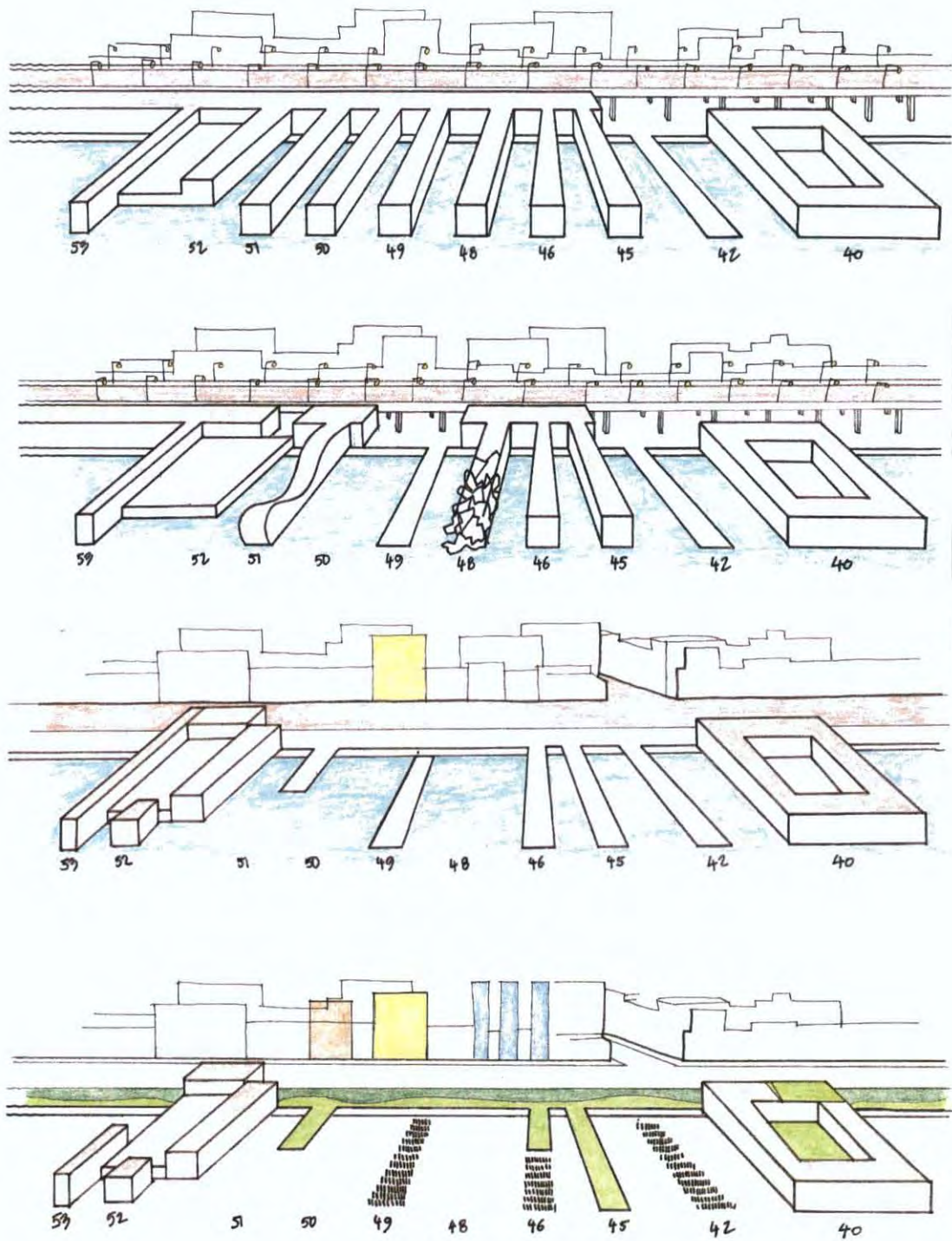


Fig 6.18: The transformation of the waterfront over the course of the post-shipping era; 1970 (top); 1977 (top center); 1988 (bottom center); 2003 (bottom)- the Hudson River Park; the waterfront is exposed, and is lined with luxury residential buildings.

An Official Park

In 1988, a *Westside Waterfront Panel* was formed with members appointed by the state, city, community and Manhattan Borough President, whose remit was to forward the development of a park along the Hudson River. Their plan consisted of a 270-acre waterfront park on the land, water and piers, with plans for its design and financing. Officially, for the first time since *Westway's* original waterfront park plan 14 years earlier the waterfront was to be enshrined as open space accessing the river for the public. It would be several years before it would actually reach fruition. This panel in 1992, morphed into the *Hudson River Park Conservancy* with the signing of a *Memorandum of Understanding* between the city and state, whose role was the management and implementation of a park plan. The *Plan for the Manhattan Waterfront*, part of the *New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* was issued in 1992 and in 1994 the Hudson Park Conservancy opened an interim path and esplanade on the Greenwich Village waterfront.

The *Design Guidelines Master Plan* for the development of a newly constructed park on the waterfront was released in 1997, and the following year was legislated through the *Hudson River Park Act* (Chapter 592 S.7845). This led to the construction of the Hudson River Park, which opened in 2003 as a linear park with piers 45, 46 and 51. It later expanded North and South of Greenwich Village (fig 6.19 over).

It is important to note the curtailment to the parks size and extension into the river as, approximately half the budget of the Hudson River Park is used for repairing rotting piers and foundations, an amount that is close to 200 million dollars (Lopate, 2004, p.131). It is necessary in order to save the overall area of the park, which depends on the projecting piers to supplement the thin linear park running along the river wall. Due to environmental restrictions new piers can not be built, so it is imperative the existing piers are retained. These restrictions were codified in the *New York State Omnibus Tax Bill*, Section 382-a 1990, which prohibits

new landfill, platforms, pilings or structures between Battery Park City and 35th Street, effectively curtailing any expansion of the park with new structures in the river.

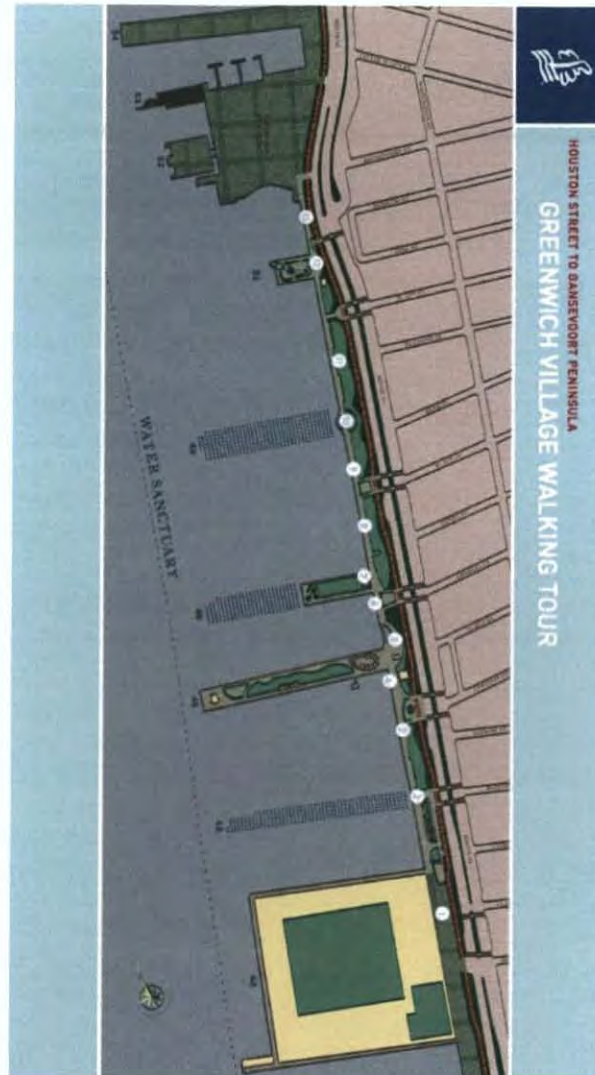


Fig 6.19: The Hudson River Park, section between pier 53 in the North and Pier 40 to the South. There are toilets and park security observation booths at (1), (4) and (12). Pier 51 (12) is reserved for children (and parents with children) exclusively. Pier 46 (7) is a recreation pier with artificial grass. The Cycle track is marked in red.



Fig 6.20: Pier 45 in 2000, as part of the temporary Hudson River Park and Esplanade, which opened in 1994.



Fig 6.21: The same view of pier 45 in 2006; the landscaping and occupants have transformed the waterfront, however it should be noted that the occupants are predominantly white.

The New Highway

On the waterfront post-*Westway* the remaining problem of the traffic had to be tackled. An artillery road was still required on the Westside to alleviate the streets of the West Village and speed up movement north and south. With the outboard option now off the table, the only solution was to build a highway in the existing, makeshift location⁷¹, cutting off the piers once again from the neighborhood. In 1993, the Department of Transport (DOT) proposed several plans for the replacement of the elevated Miller highway, a full 20 years since its initial collapse and closing. The six lane at grade plan with its tree lined central median, denoted as a boulevard to perceptively lessen its impact, and cycle lane on its western side, was agreed across the political spectrum and with local residents; work began in 1996. The new West Side Highway was completed in 2001 (fig 6.22).

There was remarkably little resistance to this new highway, even as it did exactly what the early opponents of *Westway* were against- namely a six-lane highway skirting the Village. It is possible therefore to regard this lack of resistance as being a result of gentrification and a changing of the local population, who required both easier access to the Far West Village and a reduction on inter Village traffic on newly residential streets. Also the haphazard condition of what was meant as only a temporary road running along the waterfront since 1973 left it difficult for opponents to criticize a new regulated road, which would incorporate pedestrian crossings and a specially designated cycle path.

⁷¹ This plan mimicked an earlier alternative to *Westway* proposed by its opposition in 1975, called *River Road*.



Fig 6.22: Today's West side Highway looking South from the foot of Christopher Street; to the right through the trees is the blue siding of pier 40; the hotel sign to the left is the last remnant of *Kellers Hotel and Bar*.

Re-Order

The Hudson River Park Act

The Hudson River Park Act marked a legislative position of abject suppression on this part of the City. The intention to re-order the waterfront was ensconced in a legal framework, and an ability to actively suppress any semblance of the marginal on the margin; the physical margin was to be no longer socially marginal.

The Act and the subsequent park are coached in the language of reform;⁷² a quest to sanitize the '*atavistic world*' (Bell 1962: 175) on the waterfront and bring it into the normalized fold of the city:

'The legislature hereby finds, determines and declares the following:

⁷² Following the historical precedent of the city's parks set by Olmstead and Vaux in Central Park in the 19th century.

(a)... promote the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state; increase the quality of life in the adjoining community and the state as a whole; help alleviate the blighted, unhealthy, unsanitary and dangerous conditions that characterize much of the area.

----- *(g) The legislature finds that this act is in the public interest, is a matter of state concern, and is necessary to accomplish these important public purposes. The legislature intends that the Hudson river park trust is to operate **exclusively for purposes relating to the promotion of the health and social welfare of the people of the state**' (HRP Act, Chapter 592 S. 7845, Sec. 1, 1998) emphasis added.*

The Act also outlines the sanctioned uses of the park by defining '*permitted uses*' as '*park use*' and '*park/ commercial use*' and '*compatible governmental use*'. However a clearer understanding of the Act is in the '*prohibited uses*' including; residential; manufacturing; commercial offices or warehouses; hotels; casino and riverboat gambling; facilities for motorized aircraft and '*incompatible government uses*' which includes sanitation-truck parking, bus parking, and police impound lots and storage facilities; including the removal of the FDNY fireboat at pier 53, and the removal of all activities of the Sanitation Department on Gansevoort Peninsula including the incinerator.⁷³ The Act therefore attempts to remove all vice from the waterfront and reposition it away from the margin. In conjunction with the Act, after the opening of the park in 2003, the *Hudson River Park Trust* (who has jurisdiction over the park) set out the rules and regulations for users of the park in a forty-page document; I include here those rules that make abject waterfront illegal:

751.6. Prohibited Activities and Uses

⁷³ Although these uses on pier 53 and the Gansevoort Peninsula were to be removed as per the Act by December 31, 2003, they as of yet have not been removed, although design competitions for the replacement park have been held. As of 2008, there are plans to retain the peninsula for the sanitation department and build a garbage transfer pier there; I will discuss this ignoring of the Act in the overall thesis conclusion.

(l) It is illegal for any Person to urinate in the Park.

(n) It is illegal for any Person to engage in loitering for illegal purposes in the Park. Any Person in the Park is guilty of loitering for illegal purposes who:

(1) Loiters or remains in the Park for the purpose of engaging, or soliciting another Person to engage, in sexual activity for money as defined in section 220.00 of the New York State Penal Law.

(m) It is illegal to engage in any form of sexual activity.

(o) It is illegal for any Person to appear in public on property under the jurisdiction of the Trust in such a manner that one's genitalia are unclothed or exposed.

751.7. Regulated Uses

(f) It is illegal for any Person to consume any alcoholic beverage in any playground, beach, swimming pool or other Park area or Facility.

(o) It is illegal for any Person to throw, catch, kick or strike any baseball, football, frisbee, basketball, soccer, golf or tennis ball, or similar object, or engage in any sport, game or other competition, except in areas designated and maintained by the Trust for such purpose.

751.8. Boating

(a) It is illegal for any Person to operate, land, anchor, moor, dock, tie-up, store or launch a boat or Vessel of any kind on any of the piers or along the bulkhead.⁷⁴

The Legislature, therefore suppresses the abject on the waterfront; the waterfront is now a strictly controlled space, with its own police force to ensure order and adherence to the rules and regulations; *'the once-dangerous turf has sprouted rules, regulations, and little green put-puts driven by d*ckless p*ssants in ugly uniforms'* (Lassell, cited in Lopate, 2004, p.75).

⁷⁴ Shipping is now outlawed on the waterfront.

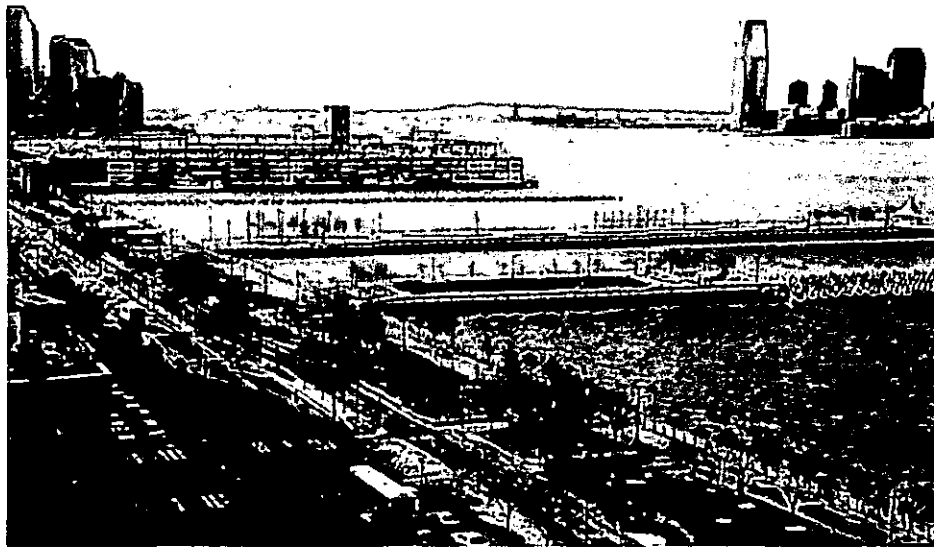


Fig 6.23: An overview of the Hudson River Park, looking South; beginning with the linear park then pier 46, beyond that pier 45, the pilings of pier 42 and in blue pier 40.

Spatial Control

The analysis of these rules and regulations however, raises several key questions on the condition of contemporary public space; particularly the concept of public space as a place where *anything goes*. Jane Jacobs' 1962 comments on the make-do lido at Pier 53 notes, '*since it does not belong to the Parks Department nobody is forbidden anything*' (1962, p. 268) and as I have shown this lack of control led the waterfront to be regarded as a zone of abjection. There was no stewardship of space on the waterfront and there was free reign for subversive colonies to gather and exploit that freedom. This led ultimately, not to a freedom for everyone but to a freedom for the abject colony and other sections of the community were effectively shut out. There did not need to be an explicit blocking of others outside the colony by the colony to control the space, fear and the feeling of not belonging are all that are required to inhibit this *public space* from public use. Weisman describes how it is fear, rather than actual attacks or harassment on the street, that causes a modulation in how space is used, particularly by women, '*if the fear of sexual harassment on the street causes women stress, the fear of rape keeps*

women off the streets at night, away from public parks and "dangerous" parts of town' this avoidance of space further reinforces the zone of abjection- Weisman notes, '*withdrawal in response to the dangers of urban life leaves the streets open to criminal behavior*' (1994, p. 70). She goes on to challenge municipal agencies to correct the realities of fear in public space, even as those fears are manipulated.⁷⁵ Therefore some modicum of supervision is required in space to make it actively public and accessible to all in society.

As much as Jacobs seems to relish the lack of oversight on the waterfront, she overlooks the waterfront's past dangerous condition when organized crime controlled its space, and she obviously was not in a position to envision the dereliction that would befall the area by the 1970s. She must have either felt no fear on the waterfront in 1962 or the users of the lido *self-policed*⁷⁶ the area in order to prevent crime from occurring. This would parallel her assertion that '*the bedrock of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street*' (1964, p. 30) and that security is provided through an active user-ship of space for '*there must be eyes upon the street*' (p. 35) to suppress illicit and/ or menacing behavior. This existed as a day-time condition, and continued to through out much of the 1960s, 70s and 80s, before eventually a breakdown in public space across the whole city in the

⁷⁵ Both Weisman and Davis, note however as real as fear manifests itself, it is disproportionate to actual threat, and both blame the media for exaggerating and racial stirring urban fear.

⁷⁶ In the 1970s the homosexual policed their own sexual world to a varying degree, by daubing messages on the entry way to the pier sheds warning of criminal activity and instances of crime, '7-5-75, 2:30PM-Pier attack by Teen agers and adults responsible for terrorizing people- breaking Pier and probably they set the fire- day time m__er now work in teams __ide Stay [Away]' (Seccombe, 1975).



late 1980s led to the need for more direct municipal intervention in the control and policing of space in the city.

In Toronto, *The Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children* (METRAC) Project, this outlines provisions that both provide safety and the feeling of safety:

'Lighting, sightlines/ visibility, entrapment possibilities, ear and eye distance, movement predictors (such as pathways and tunnels), signage/ information, visibility of park staff/ police, public telephones, assailant escape routes, maintenance levels (for example, neglected areas or replacing damaged lights and signs), parks programming information, and isolation (one of the biggest factors in feeling safe or unsafe)' (Weisman 1994: 71)

These elements of security in space provide safety and the perception of safety. They offer a constructive means of creating a safe, hospitable environment for the use of public space by men, women and children, but particularly counter the threat of harassment felt by the female in public in the city. It is in essence a method of self-policing of space in line with Jane Jacobs. Its method of abjection suppression is in the creation of space less inviting to abject elements of crime, public sex etc., helping to prevent the break down in order that danger and fear causes.

As much as these METRAC ideas were incorporated into the design of the Hudson River Park, they were not done so explicitly and the concept of self-regulated space they espouse had been overtaken by the far more municipally pro-active *quality-of-life* means of spatial control, which had come to dominate 1990s New York.⁷⁷ Both of these methods of spatial ordering produce to varying degrees, gentrified public space with a suppression of the abject. However

⁷⁷ As a park, which officially came into fruition during the neo-conservative tenure of Mayor Rudy Giuliani, its not surprising the Hudson River Park would be created under a quality-of-life paradigm.

unlike METRAC which is based upon social inclusion, particularly for the female, *quality-of-life* and its use of *broken windows theory* is based on exclusion of unwanted spatial elements. It does so through criminalization of activity and people (homeless) and through heavy use of *order-maintenance policing* to reign in public space. The paradigm of quality-of-life under Giuliani, (in the era of the legislation that created the Hudson River Park) increased police and security spending by the City, while at the same time cutting funding to social services, (particularly the homeless) and incentivizing through tax-breaks the gentrification of zones of abjection in the city, producing public space that is both under police control and developer funded and designed.⁷⁸ There are several critics⁷⁹ of this method of maintaining gentrified public space, which has the potential to undermine the racial melting pot of New York and places the decisions of what is socially acceptable in the hands of police, developers and local politicians instead of the a self-regulating general populace, Harcourt notes:

'The quality-of-life initiative focuses [] on the type of minor offenses- loitering, fare beating, and panhandling- that affect poorer members of society, a group that, tragically, includes a disproportionate number of minorities. By handing over the informal power to define deviance to police officers and a few community members, we may be making possible the repression of a political, cultural, or sexual outsiders in a way that is antithetical to our conceptions of democratic theory' (2001, p. 180)

This criticism holds most power when we consider the lagging abject element on the waterfront that has survived gentrification- the Legendary Children. As a group they are racially different in a dominantly white neighborhood, poor in a rich neighborhood and sexually deviant

⁷⁸ This corporatization of public parks in New York became notable when Donald Trump purchased the Wollman Ice Rink, and more recently in the renovation and renaming of the fountain in Washington Square Park, by Tishman Speyer a real estate development corporation. Also of note is Bryant Park Corporation (the largest of its kind in the US) which manages and funds the city owned public park.

⁷⁹ See Vitale (2008) , Harcourt (2001) and David (1990).

in a hetero-centric society and therefore under threat from an empowered police strategy.⁸⁰ This crack down on an insecure unwanted minority not only undermines the cultural heritage of the waterfront and Greenwich Village but it removes one of the very few safe zones for gay, lesbian and transgender youth in America. In Weisman's ideas of how to make space safe for women, this bullying of a minority is avoided as the minority themselves as part of the community become part of the regulatory framework of space itself. With the quality-of-life method of control, the dominating power of the male abject is merely passed to another form of patriarchal domination, that of the police. This is of benefit to female users of public space in that it makes it safer to use, however the female ultimately remains as a spatial interloper, an outsider in the male dominated waterfront.⁸¹ In this respect although the female denotes a gentrified waterfront, she is merely a symptom of the change, not the instigator of change itself.

Post 9/11

The other issue at stake on the newly policed and securitized waterfront is the spatial affect of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The Greenwich Village waterfront is an active maritime border of the Nation, State and City, and therefore is of particular interest to law enforcement of both local and national concern. The Department of Homeland Security made grants to both New Jersey and New York for the implementation of increased security in the port of New York (water area), including funding for additional security vessels. No funding was used for the securitization of the waterfront itself (the edge), but since 2001 the City has prioritized anti-terrorism procedures in what are deemed vulnerable entry points to the city- the waterfront, bridges and tunnels, rail and road networks- leading to the inevitable increase in police

⁸⁰ The advocacy group FIERCE has tracked and recorded the police harassment and crack down on the LGBTQ youth on the waterfront.

⁸¹ Because she retains the potential to be interpreted as 'whore in the street' (Agrest, 207, p. 367)

surveillance of the Hudson River Park and other waterfront sections of the city.⁸² When anti-terrorism⁸³ and maintenance order policing are taken together and applied on the waterfront, the former zone of abjection becomes a militarized zone. It becomes what Mike David would call a *'beautifully landscaped'* park with *'a huge dose of menace'* on the side, *'to scare away the homeless and poor'* (1990, p. 234), reinforcing the areas reconfiguration into a wealthy gentrified neighborhood.

Conclusion

The Hudson River Park Act, along with the use of a curfew and rules, reigned in the abject waterfront and quelled its marginalism. The waterfront then has become normalized by virtue of a strict adherence to rules in order to prevent it disemboweling its past and disrupting the bucolic park. It is with rules, regulations and a police presence that the area remains safe for the female user. However, the presence of police power (predominantly male) poses the possibility of undermining the feeling of safety by women.

It is interesting how there is a joining of ideologies on the waterfront in the creation of a gentrified space. The two means of control in space, represented by the liberal left and the conservatives are a mutilation themselves of ideology. The means of self-regulation as espoused by Jane Jacobs actually follows libertarian values of self-reliance and deregulation of municipal power- yet libertarianism is a core principal of conservatism. On the other hand, the police strategies of the Giuliani administration rely on a centralized government control of all activity in space, which is enforced by the police. This idea of centralized planning has in America been part of the liberal movement. It appears therefore that the creation of gentrification (particularly

⁸² Remembering that the plane hijackers on 9/11 used the Hudson corridor as a means of navigation.

⁸³ Although officially anti-terrorism policing does not use racial-profiling, it is generally accepted that they do, due to many racially charged high profile incidents.

the making of streets safe for women) relies on all parts of the political spectrum in order to come about.

The main question with the current park condition on the waterfront is in whether the park and the now up-scaled neighborhood are sustainable. There have been discussions in New York about the possibility of taxing residents of buildings who overlook the waterfront. This tax would go to fund the upkeep of the Hudson River Park. Given the increase in land value that is attributable to the park, the tax may become a reality in the near future.

In terms of the now abject free park, there is the remaining possibility that the municipally controlled piers 52 and 53, could retain the marginal and dirty. There is a proposal currently in the New York Legislature to build a garbage transfer station at these piers. This would rebirth the commercial waterfront and has profound implications for the Hudson River Park. These new proposals demonstrate how the waterfront always remains in flux and no condition remains static.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The domains of the colonists on the waterfront are dependant on the physical state of the edge and shift in relation to spatial distortions. The dominant colonies of the Greenwich Village waterfront aid in the designation of a zone of abjection, and identify the edge of the Village as a placement of unique social events. They are- the *longshoremen Joe Docks*; the parasitic *Gangster and Shylocks*; the *homosexuals* dominated by the *Clone* identity; the *Legendary Children* of the *gay street gangs* and finally (for now) the existence of the mother as metaphor for gentrification on the waterfront. Each of these colonies existed or assisted in the abject. Their identity and spatiality- as noted by their bodily terrains- are subsumed in abjection.

The end (for now) of a waterfront transformation is manifest in a blanketing of the past in a layer of horticultural platitudes. The past is processed and defecated by the earthworms¹ in an organic renewal. Any previous spatial occupier or conditions are forgotten in the grass and trees that now dominate the once abject waterfront. The abject exists today in a suppressed state, held under by laws, rules and regulations, because Kristeva notes: '*an unshakeable adherence*

¹ Cleansing through defilement ; and there is a certain irony in the colloquial name of earthworms as 'night crawlers'; the worms are the only night crawlers that remain on the waterfront after the police enforce curfew; and as environmental purifiers;

to *Prohibition and Law is necessary if that perverse interspace of abjection is to be hemmed in and thrust aside*' (Kristeva 1982: 16). This shifts the genius loci of the margin to the center. The previous spatial existence as the frontier, the underworld and the prospect of continuous twilight underneath the highway- a genius loci of outsiderism and social dissent- has been reassigned and buried. Within this change the waterfront as place of adventure and possibility has been lost. There no longer is a line of events on the city's edge; no immigration/ emigration; no import/ export; no arrival/ departure, (no binary transfer). In essence the spatial uniqueness of the waterfront has collapsed; (the border is now at JFK, La Guardia and Newark).

The romance of the *epic dereliction*² remains only in a fictionalized memory of place and the passing colony's story, as their zone is no longer writ on the landscape. It too has collapsed into the river and towed away in barges by the Army Corp of Engineers (military re-ordering). That dystopian/ utopian³ space on the waterfront, whether as port or playground was the city's underbelly of abjection, where men ventured to play out the varying roles of his identity. This *male activity- (social danger?)*- is now repressed by what Davis notes a '*publicly-subsidized "urban renaissance"*' as in the spatial restructuring of downtown Los Angeles.

What this restructuring does is discount the past in order to civilize the present, treating the past colonial environment as a threat to stability. It must therefore be forgotten- the waterfront must be sanitized and cleansed in order to enter bourgeois society. This leads to a selective use of the spatial layers that make up this part of the city. The past human is removed and only a shipping industry (faceless- therefore free of the abject human), is discussed in the waterfronts history. The human and his zone of the colony are obliterated on the revised waterfront. As in Horace Smith's *Ozymandias* (1818)- only a lone finger pier remains on the site of the past, disconnected from its origins; belying its human beginnings:

² Borrowing the phrase from Davis (1990).

³ Depending on your location (side) relative to the 'tracks'.

*'In Egypt's sandy silence, all alone,
Stands a gigantic leg, which far off throws
The only shadow that the Desert knows:-
"I am great OZYMANDIAS," said the stone,
"The King of Kings; this mighty City shows
"The wonders of my hand." - The City's gone,-
Nought but the Leg remaining to disclose
The site of this forgotten Babylon.*

*We wonder, - and some Hunter may express
Wonder like ours, when thro' the wilderness
Where London stood, holding the Wolf in chace,
He meets some fragment huge, and stops to guess
What powerful but unrecorded race
Once dwelt in that annihilated place.* (emphasis added)

But I caution, this nostalgia is merely a sugarcoated version of the real horrors and abjection on the waterfront. As easy as it is to mourn the old waterfront, in doing so we forget that no group or colony wanted to remain on the margin.⁴ It was the marginal zone of the city, a last resort for work (the longshoremen), dignity, freedom (the homosexuals) and safe space (the LGBTQ youth). In this regard the colonies had no choice in their ending up on the waterfront. The colonies harbored dreams of changing their lives and getting away from the edge, away from hell. The mourning therefore for the past is rather pernicious, for it glosses over the real terror of the waterfront occupants and assumes a utopian former New York City. It conveniently forgets the muggings, murder, drug addiction, Aids, crime, dirt and abjection. This mourning for New York pervades all social classes and wrongly assumes life was always better for earlier generations.

⁴ Although we must assume the organized crime, did quiet enjoy being hidden on the edge so he could carry out his crimes?

On the waterfront today, all the abjection is gone. The power of the Legendary Children has been strongly curtailed and their freedom is gone. The new park covers up and suppresses the abject, but is that such a bad thing? Would a derelict pier left ideally standing on the edge provide anything other than longing for the past? Or would anyone care? (Unlikely) Would the nostalgia for pre-Aids sex awaken a waterfront of sexual pleasures? (Hardly)

Although, I suffer from this nostalgia of a carefree ruin of a waterfront, it is dishonest to say I would prefer it to the new Hudson River Park. I like the safety and cleanliness of the place. I like knowing there are police present; so I don't get mugged. I like the lighting, the benches, and the crowds in summer. I was there in late June 2009, fresh with my knowledge of the waterfront and yet even I became ambivalent to the past while I was there, because for everything that no longer remains, there is now in its place a bustling, social exciting stage of human activity. That will itself transform again and again in the future.

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9.0 APPENDIX

7.0 APPENDIX

The Hudson River Park

The Steps that led to the Creation of the Hudson River Park

The waterfront was used as a *de facto* park, in the 70s and 80s, a place of recreation *on and adjacent* to the dilapidated piers. In 1971 local residents (independent of the colony), weighed in on the UDC's landfill proposal, and its planned park over transport infrastructure on the West side, by arguing to '*open more piers to the public..... make it more livable and give [the city] an attractive and accessible shoreline*' (NYT: Sept 12, 1971). But, even as the use of the piers grew, concentration of effort was on defeating *Westway*, not on the provision of a park for the Greenwich Village waterfront.

In 1982, noting the use of the village waterfront by the public the *New York City Local Waterfront Revitalization Program* (LWRP) identified the West side waterfront as an area in need of public access. The LWRP was developed under the *State Coastal Management Program* and the *Federal Coastal Zone Management Act*, and approved by the Department of State and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in 1982.

In the aftermath of the *Westway* defeat in 1985, the continued requirement for a transport artery kept political interest in the fate of the waterfront, and both Governor Cuomo and Mayor Koch (both *Westway* supporters) formed the *West Side Task Force* to recommend a plan for the future of the waterfront and highway, out of which, with the Department of Transport's (DOT), Community Participation Program (1986) came the at grade plan for the Route 9A highway. This plan (1987) incorporated a walkway and bicycle path in the bulkhead along the Hudson- this esplanade was the first intentional park on the post-shipping waterfront.

In 1988, the West Side Waterfront Panel was created under a Memorandum of Understanding between the city and state, to help implement the Task Force's recommendations and coordinate the esplanade with the DOT's construction of Route 9A. The Panel consulted with the local community in order to minimize conflicts brought on by the city's decentralized planning process, what Lopate (2004) calls the '*local communities parochial agenda*'. The Panel also consulted business and labor leaders (the construction unions had been big backers of *Westway*), government agencies and the boroughs elected officials. The Panel's recommendations in *A Vision for the Hudson River Waterfront Park* were published in 1990, which included the restoration and preservation of 13 piers for public use, limits on waterfront development and recommendations on a successor organization. That same year directed under the panel's recommendations, New York State voted in Section 383-a of Chapter 190 of the Laws of 1990. This law limits construction in and on the river from Battery Park to West 35th street; although the panel proposed a

park to extend north to 59th street, the law did not wish to intentionally interfere with the remaining waterfront industries of cruise ships, tourism and municipal activities that extend north of 35th street.

Preceding the West Side Waterfront Panel, Governor Coumo and Mayor Dinkins signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1992, to endorse the panel's report.

The revitalization of the West Side waterfront is of the highest importance and the creation of a new Hudson River Park, is key to such revitalization. The Governor and Mayor agree with the conclusion of the West Side Waterfront Panel that the creation of the Park will improve quality of life, enhance the environment, boost tourism and stimulate the economy. Accordingly, the Governor and Mayor fully support the Report of the West side Improvement Panel and specifically endorse the Panel's recommendations.

The Memorandum also created the Hudson River Park Conservancy (HRPC), as a subsidiary of the State Urban Development Corporation (UDC) as a government body to further the implementation of the park plan, secure regulatory approvals from the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure and the State's Environmental Conservation Law, enforce height and bulk zoning restrictions and construct the waterfront park. The HRPC must also carry out a Public Participation Program, within which it must fund *community design consultants*. Although, public participation had been included since the end of the *Westway* project in order to avoid opposition, community involvement in projects, which affect them, became law in 1989 with the amendment of Section 197-a of the New York City Charter.

The City Charter, in Section 197-a, authorizes community boards and borough boards, along with the Mayor, the City Planning Commission, the Department of City Planning and any Borough President, to sponsor plans for the redevelopment, growth, and improvement of the city, its boroughs and communities. Once approved by the Commission and adopted by the City Council, 197-a plans guide future actions of city agencies in the areas addressed in the plans (197-a Plan Technical Guide, New York City Department of City Planning, 1997: 1).

The *Plan for the Manhattan Waterfront*, part of the *New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan* was issued by Mayor Dinkins' office in 1992. This plan was required in order to create zoning changes, as the HRPC did not have that authority. The zoning amendments it proposed were approved by the City Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council in October 1993. The plan mandated the city to support implementation of the Hudson River Park Conservancy (HRPC). The plan set out the future of the waterfront under four dictates:

1. *Protect and enhance the **Natural Waterfront**, comprising beaches, wetlands, wildlife habitats, sensitive ecosystems and the water itself.*
2. *Reestablish the public's connection to the **Public Waterfront**, including parks, esplanades, piers, street ends, vistas and waterways that offer public open spaces and waterfront views.*
3. *Facilitate water-dependent uses and ensure sufficient manufacturing zoned land to accommodate the **Working Waterfront**, where water dependent, maritime and industrial uses cluster or where various transportation and municipal facilities are dispersed.*
4. *Promote new uses on the **Redeveloping Waterfront**, where land uses have recently changed or where vacant and underutilized properties suggest potential for beneficial change (1993). Emphasis in original.*

As the HRPC cannot issue bonds to raise capital, capital funding for the new park was sought through the state and city legislatures, including the federal governments original \$85 million for the purchase for *Westway's* right-of-way, which in an agreement with the state, the payment did not need to be returned, upon condition that the \$85 million would help fund public access to the waterfront (Bone 1997: 220). In 1995, New York State was sued by New York City to prevent the state reneging on the agreement with the federal government, (an act that would have jeopardized the Hudson River Park). This jostling over funding undermined the HRPC, as did its association with its over-body the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), which as a state body existed exclusively to create economic development. The park itself once operational was to be self-funded from *park compatible* revenue sources. Three sites for this activity were identified:

1. The piers at 42nd street for tourist excursions, cruise ship terminals and the Intrepid Air and Space Museum, situated on a docked World War II aircraft carrier.
2. Chelsea Piers Sport Center, at 23rd street in the Chelsea neighborhood, three piers have been privately developed with an ice rink, conference center, private gym, indoor football fields, golf driving range and television studio.
3. Pier 40 in Greenwich Village, various plans have continuously been promoted and rejected for this pier, including a Frank Gehry designed Guggenheim Museum, a Home Depot superstore, a casino and a

permanent Cirque du Soleil venue, however nothing has yet been built by which to earn revenue, other than the car parking that has existed there since 1971.

The Hudson River Park Conservancy retains piers 52 and 53 on the Gansevoort Peninsula under municipal control by the Department of Sanitation and the Fire Department.¹

Under a 197-a plan the HRPC and the community carried out a design initiative in 1994-1995, by funding design consultants to work with each community along the proposed park. The *Concept and Financial Plan* that this created was released in 1995 with a physical plan created by Quennell Rothschild Associates, landscape architects and lead design consultants with Signe Nielsen, fig. At the same time the HRPC began preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

In 1994 the Hudson River Park Conservancy opened an interim bike path and esplanade on the Greenwich Village waterfront, with access to pier 45 and 46.

The *Design Guidelines Master Plan* was issued in 1997 to unify a design for the whole park, yet allow for the park be designed in segments to both ease construction schedules and to satisfy the individual demands of local communities. The Greenwich Village waterfront is mainly set in Segment 4, with pier 40 in segment 2, and piers 52 and 53 in segment 5. At the same time the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), was issued. The following year after a series of public hearings the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was released. After adoption of the Statement of Findings by the over-body ESDC, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act's (SEQRA), lead agency, the state completed the review process for the park.² In early 1998 the HRPC filed for permits with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The Hudson River Park Act

In 1998, in order for physical work to begin on the waterfront, legislation was enacted to formally designate the project area and allow for state and city funding. The Hudson River Park Act (Chapter 592 S.7845) was passed by the New York State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Pataki, approved and effective September 8th 1998. The Act established the Hudson River Park Trust to continue the work of the Hudson River Park Conservancy and build, manage and operate the Hudson River Park. In signing the Act the legislature found, determined and declared the advantageous nature of the Hudson River Park to the state and its people: Sec. 2:

¹ To change in Act of 1998, which dictates a date for removal of these services from the waterfront.

² <http://www.hudsonriverpark.org/pdfs/construction/planningHistory.pdf>

- a. *The planning and development of the Hudson river park as a public park is a matter of state concern and in the interest of the people of the state.*
- b. *The creation of the Hudson river park will encourage, promote and expand public access to the Hudson river, promote water-based recreation, and enhance the natural, cultural, and historic aspects of the Hudson river.*
- c. *It is in the public interest to encourage park uses and allow limited park/ commercial uses in the Hudson river park consistent with the provisions of this act and the general plan for the park.*
- d. *The marine environment of the park is known to provide critical habitat for striped bass and other aquatic species. It is in the public interest to protect and conserve this habitat.*
- e. *It is in the public interest for the state and city of New York to act together to finance the Hudson River Park and for the Hudson River Park Trust to design, develop, operate, and maintain the Hudson river park, including through the use of available federal funds. It is intended that to the extent practicable and consistent with the intent of subdivision (c) of this section, the costs of the operation and maintenance of the park be paid by revenues generated within the Hudson river park and those revenues be used only for park purposes. Additional funding by the state and the city may be allocated as necessary to meet the costs of operating and maintaining the park.*
- f. *The planning, environmental review, interim improvement, and development process for the park that has been conducted to date has furthered the foregoing purposes and it is essential for that process to continue in order to accomplish such purposes. It is intended that the Hudson River Park Trust, to the extent provided and subject to the limitations set forth in this act, replace: (i) the Hudson river park Conservancy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the New York state urban development corporation; and (ii) the New York state urban development corporation; with respect to their authority over the park.*

- g. *The legislature finds that this act is in the public interest, is a matter of state concern, and is necessary to accomplish these important public purposes. The legislature intends that the Hudson river park trust is to operate exclusively for purposes relating to the promotion of the health and social welfare of the people of the state.*

The Act legally defines the area of the Hudson river park, and confirms the retention of ownership of the waterfront by the city and state, where the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation have authority, except where the underwater lands held by the state are under the authority of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. All lands are held under the Public Trust Doctrine.

The *Water Revitalization Program* (WRP) of 1982 was revised in 1999 to take account of the changes on the Hudson River waterfront, and the Hudson River Park Act. It confirmed that the city, state and federal government were in agreement on the future of the New York waterfront. It was revised WRP was ratified by the City Council in 1999 and New York State and the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2002.

Construction began on the Greenwich Village section of the Hudson River Park in 1999 on the bulkhead section and on the piers in 2000, consisting of the reconstruction of piers 45, 46 and 51 for recreational purposes, an esplanade with seating, lawns, public toilets, and public access across Route 9A. This section opened on May 31st 2003.